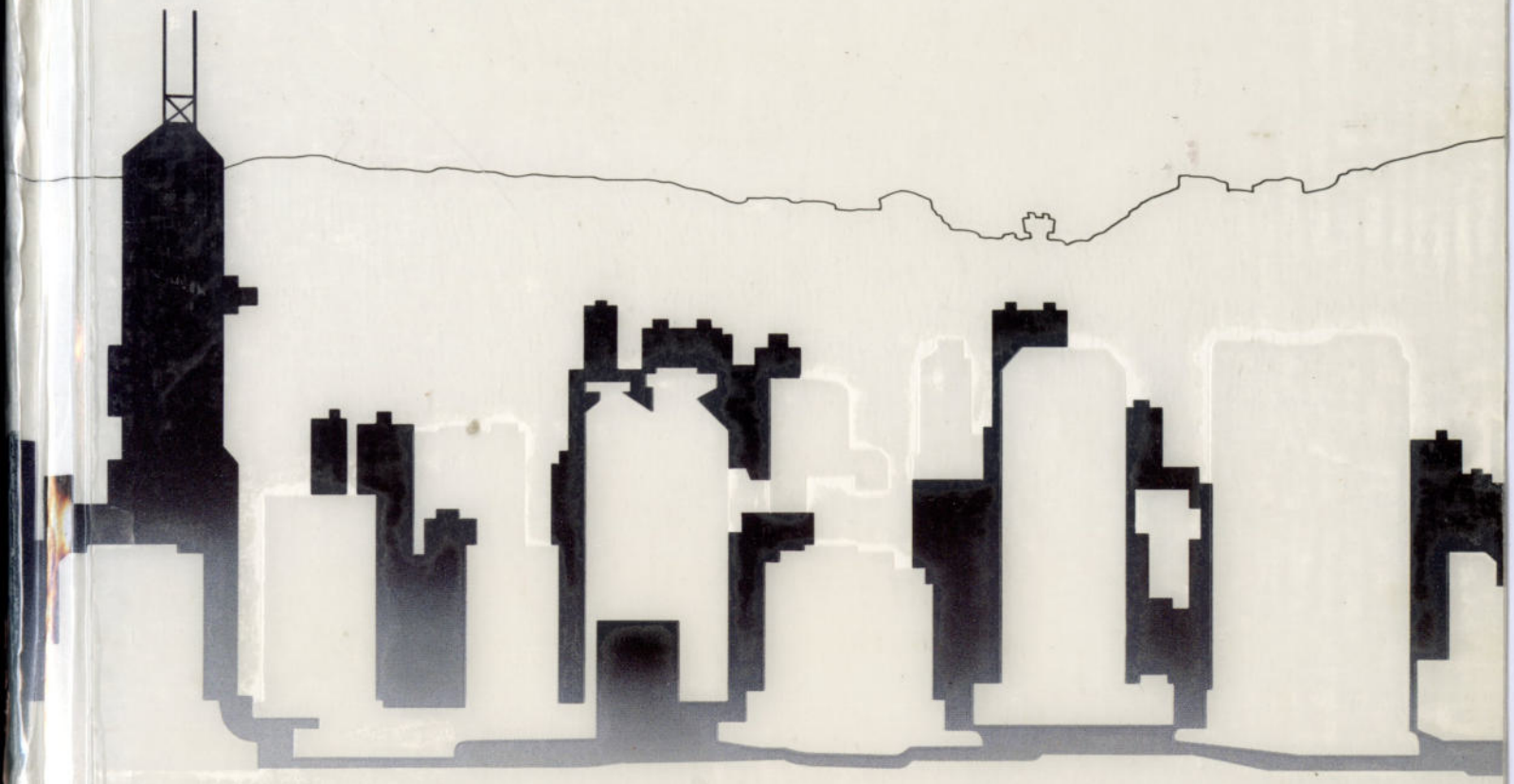

A History of Public Service Advertising

HONG KONG IN POSTERS

by Arthur Hacker

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HONG KONG IN POSTERS

A History of Public Service Advertising

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- 9 MAR 1998

by Arthur Hacker

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H32
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INTRODUCTION

e Hong Kong Government Information
ices, or GIS as it is generally known,
s been designing and producing
materials since 1950.

In the ea ars there was little money for
Government p rs and very few sites
were available for their display. It was not
until the 1972 Clean Hong Kong
Campaign that GIS public service
campaigns really took off.

This book offers a retrospective look at the
changing styles of posters produced by
GIS over the past four decades.

For students of design, and for anyone
interested in the impact on community
development achieved by this key medium
of communication, it should provide
a fascinating glimpse into the social history
of Hong Kong.

I have attempted to convey my personal
philosophy of poster design and public
service advertising, which is different from
normal commercial advertising, in simple
terms that are easy to understand.
Advertising jargon, like all jargon,
is a necessary evil. It varies from country
to country — and agency to agency.

The opinions stated are my own and do
not necessarily reflect the opinions of the
Hong Kong Government or of other
designers.

The importance of this publication lies in
the posters themselves. They are the work
of numerous art directors, designers,
artists, illustrators, photographers and
copywriters, both from GIS and the
private sector.

When I arrived in Hong Kong in 1967
I started with one untrained artist and
a drawing board. At present,
the GIS Creative Team has around
a hundred well trained and competent
professionals producing all forms of pub
service advertising.

This is their work.

Arthur Hacker MBE, ARCA

Arthur Hacker was the Hong Kong
Government Information Services'
Art Director (1967-1974) and
Creative Director (1974-1989).

Acknowledgements

The posters depicted in this book represent the contributions of a large number of people working within and on behalf of the Hong Kong Government Information Services. Among these are:

Redge Solley
David Au
Carlos Buendia
Peter Campbell
David Chang
Thompson Chan
David Chen
Eddie Cheng
John Chiang
Stone Chiang
David Ching
Lorraine Choi
Peter Chow
Augustine Chu
Rystick Chu
Paul Fan
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Leslie Gibbs
Lynette Grass
David Ho
K. T. Ho
Anthony Ip
Franklin Lau
David Leonard
Libby Leung
Peter Ma
Mak Hoi
Agay Ng
Martin Pollard
Raymond Tam
Paul Tang
Daniel Wong
Raymond Wong
Roy Wraight
Sylvia Yan
Wynnie Yang
Magdy Yiu
C. K. Wong
Milton Wong
Pansy Wong

Some of the designs were produced and photographs taken over 30 years ago. We therefore apologise if any designer or photographer has been excluded inadvertently from this list.

Without the help and support of the Government Printer it would not have been possible to attain the improved standards of printing and production over the years.

Clean Hong Kong Campaign

Social history is often reflected in advertising, particularly public service advertising. This can be seen in the Clean Hong Kong Campaign.

In the early sixties, when Hong Kong was a society largely made up of refugees from the rural areas of China, the folksy Miss Ping On was used as a symbol. In the brash, dynamic, early seventies, she was replaced by Lap Sap Chung and Miss Super Clean. As society became more affluent; youth, health, the family and leisure were the predominant themes.

1 A model of Lap Sap Chung was demolished in Statue Square during the launching of the 1972 Clean Hong Kong Campaign.

2 Three Miss Super Cleans put the litterbug in the bin.

3 Miss Ping On.

In the early eighties the campaign took on a tougher look. "Hong Kong is Watching" was the slogan. The graphics and the theme were aggressive. The basic message was that, if you live in a modern sophisticated city, you should behave like a modern sophisticated human being.

In the bitter-sweet mid-eighties the message softened again into "Everybody Loves a Clean Hong Kong."

CC 1965

The 1972 Clean Hong Kong Campaign was the first large campaign to be launched by the Hong Kong Governme It took two years to plan and used stro graphics to put over the message.

Symbols

With a largely graphic campaign a *Symbol* can be useful to establish a recognisable image or identity.

The 1972 version of the Clean Hong Kong *Symbol* was rather fussy. The design suffered from the practical necessity of producing a *Symbol* which the unsophisticated public of the time could easily understand. However, if the *Symbol* was somewhat primitive in execution, it was a useful design element. The triangle was a good basic shape for a design package. It is important that a *Symbol* or *Logo* should be simple to use. They should be equally effective when reduced to a centimetre or enlarged to 10 metres. They must have the flexibility to be used three-dimensionally. They must be easily compatible with a variety of typefaces and characters. They must be easy to use and not conflict in mood and style when superimposed on a design, photograph or illustration.

1 The original 1972 *Symbol*.

2 The revised *Symbol*, introduced in 1981, was clean and modern.

3 A Picnic Warden badge.

4, 5 & 6 A series of supporting *Symbols* was designed for the Clean 75 Campaign which was targeted at young people.

LOGOS

A *Logo* is a *Symbol, Emblem* or *Trademark* made up from words, letters or characters. If no letters or characters are involved, it is technically not a *Logo*. It often contains a *Symbol* or *Advertising Device*.

In a dual language society, a design which uses both Roman letters and Chinese characters can become extremely cluttered and complicated. The same design criteria apply to both *Symbols* and *Logos*. They must be simple to be effective.

The 1973 Fight Crime Campaign broken dagger is a *Logo*. The dagger was never used on its own without either Chinese characters or English words, or both. Although it was a very memorable *Logo* it was an awkward shape and difficult to use. It was replaced in 1979 by a simpler design.

2

3

1 The original Fight Crime broken dagger *Logo*.

2 In the new *Logo*, the character for Crime was put behind bars.

3 The Government Information Services' *Logo* symbolizes the circulation of information.

SEALS AND HERALDIC DEVICES

It is safer to avoid the use of *Coats-of-Arms, Crests* or *Chinese Seals*. If one is not an expert in heraldry or calligraphy it is easy to make a costly error.

One of the objects of a *Symbol* is instant recognition and identification with a product or organization. *Seals* and *Coats-of-Arms* tend to look alike. In a cosmopolitan society like Hong Kong *Symbols* should be used which are easily recognizable by people of different cultures, backgrounds and race. *Symbols* should be truly international.

Seals and *Crests* can be used very successfully in up-market packaging and corporate and institutional design. But one should be extremely wary of attempting to design any sort of *Heraldic Device*. It is a job for the expert. Seals should be left to scholars.

1

1 The Hong Kong Armorial Bearings, produced by the College of Heralds, was based on a design conceived in Stanley Internment Camp by E.I. Wynne-Jones during the Japanese occupation.

CARTOON CHARACTERS

A *Cartoon Character* can be used as a *Symbol* of a campaign, but the chances of creating a successful one are very slim and they take an enormous amount of promoting. Finding a *Character* to whom the public will warm is largely a matter of chance.

The litterbug, Lap Sap Chung, and Miss Super Clean were both launched at the same time and promoted equally. Miss Super Clean soon dropped out of the picture, but Lap Sap Chung became a folk villain. For the "Year of the Rabbit" a white bunny called Siu Pak To was introduced to counteract the villainous litterbug. Once again evil triumphed. Loveable rogues like Lap Sap Chung, the Pink Panther, Bugs Bunny and Donald Duck are inevitably more popular than "goodies". Even Mickey Mouse began life as a rather unpleasant rodent. He didn't become "Mr. Niceguy" until well after he was established.

Of the thousands of *Cartoon Characters* that have been used in advertising campaigns this century, very few have really worked out well. The chance of success is remote. Sometimes one can be lucky.

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1975

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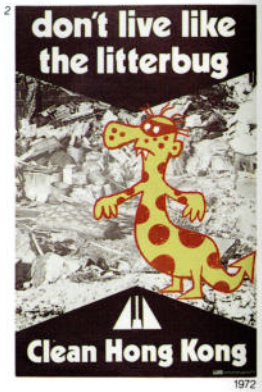

1972

3

1972

1 Siu Pak To triumphs over Lap Sap Chung.

2 The first Lap Sap Chung poster.

3 Miss Super Clean and Lap Sap Chung promote their contrasting life styles.

4 The King Kong effect was achieved by sandwiching two transparencies together.

4

Live Characters

You have a greater chance of success if an actor or model is used to play your *Character*. It is helpful if you can establish your *Character* on television and other media as well as posters. The actor or model playing your *Character* must be put under contract; otherwise, if your campaign is successful and you want to use him again, he can name his own price. He could also be poached by other agencies. In the 1979 Clean Hong Kong Campaign we put together a *Family* which was used throughout the year.

Established *Characters* like Santa Claus, door gods and mythological creatures can be used. They are of course out of *Copyright*, so anyone has access to them.

The use of a *Character* is expensive and not without its dangers. Models and actors sometimes behave badly and can wreck a campaign. One of the biggest companies in America had its fingers burnt when a "squeaky clean" girl who appeared on their soap packet turned out to be a "blue movie" star.

1

1979

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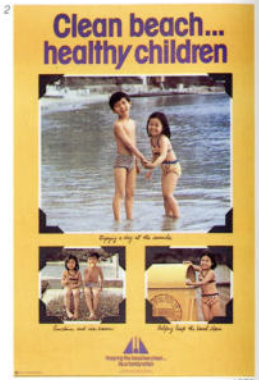

1979

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1978

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1975

1 & 2 English and Chinese versions of the 1979 Family Album series.

3 The mythological Door Gods proved a popular subject for the Chinese New Year poster.

4 A traditional Chinese painting was commissioned for the 1975 Year of the Rabbit.

ENDORSEMENT ADVERTISING

With *Endorsement Advertising* the risk is even higher. The use of film stars, sportsmen and celebrities in advertising is fraught with problems. Being already in the public eye their private lives are highly visible. They can easily lose credibility or become unpopular overnight. They are also difficult to handle. They have busy schedules and photo sessions are hard to arrange.

Many top advertising men question the effectiveness of *Endorsement Advertising* on the grounds that you promote the personality at the expense of the product. In other words people remember the film star and not what he or she is selling.

However, clients like *Endorsement Advertising* and for the right campaign it can work very well. Unfortunately, it is often used indiscriminately. Creative Directors tend to use this approach when they can't think of anything better.

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1974

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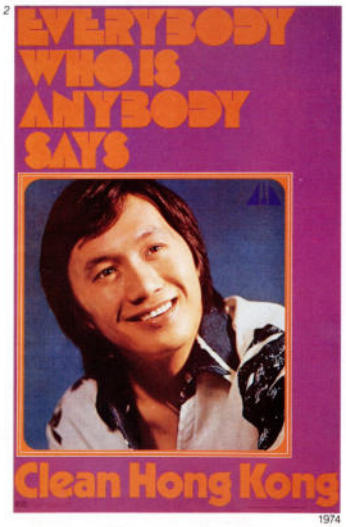


1974

1 & 2 Actress Siao Fong-fong and singer Sam Hui gave their services free in support of the campaign, providing an excellent example of *Endorsement Advertising*.

3 The 1981 Clean Beach Campaign was *Soft Sell*.

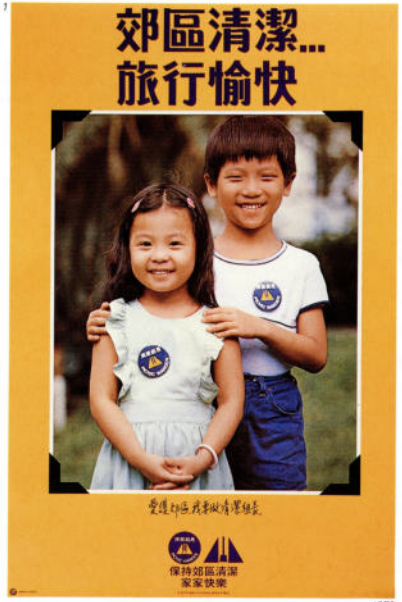
Graphic Devices

A *Graphic Device* helps to establish the look of a campaign. It can be a very simple pattern like a black border with a yellow corner, as in the "Dog" poster, or rather more complicated, as with the "Family" series, where a "Photo Album" image was used.

It can also have tremendous impact and become the dominating feature of the campaign. The "Eyes" *Graphic Device* in the 1981 "Hong Kong is Watching" approach was very strong. It was used for four years until it was decided to adopt a softer policy. As a result the *Graphic Device* of a photograph shaped like a heart was introduced for "Everybody Loves a Clean Hong Kong".

Graphic Devices establish the style and image of any campaign. They can be very dominant like the "Eyes", or they can be extremely subtle. Their impact tends to be generally undervalued. There is a lot more to poster design than just stripping in some nice lettering over a pretty picture.

1



1979

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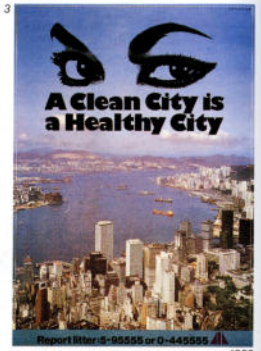


1983

2

1981

1 The Photo Album *Graphic Device.*

2 & 3 1981 to 1984 used the *Hard Sell* Eyes.

4 The 1978 Dog poster was reprinted for use in Australia.

4

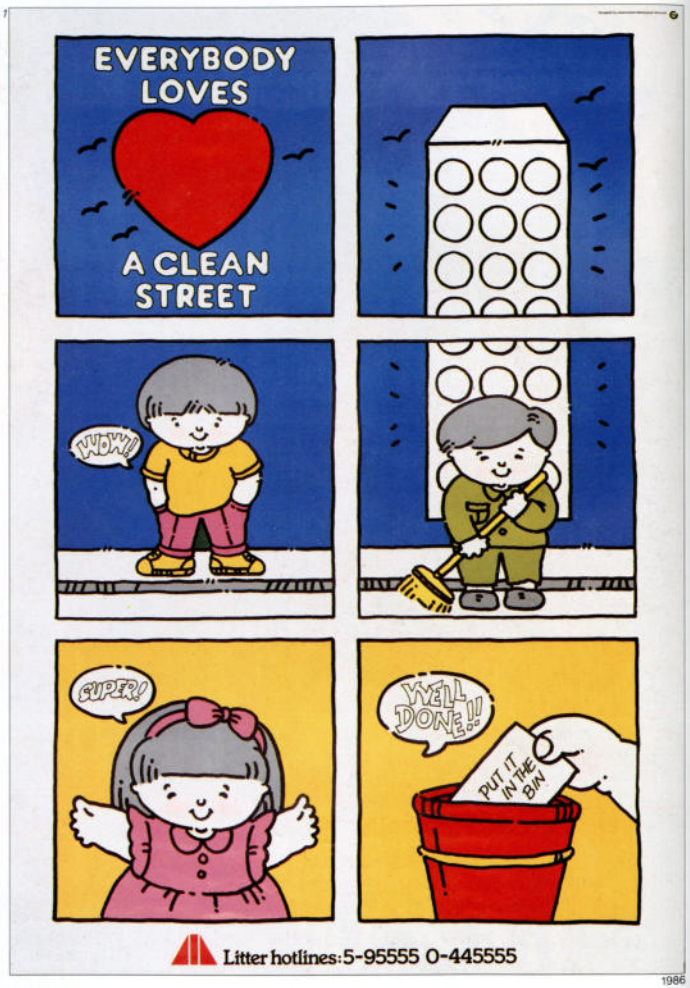
1978

GIMMICKS

A *Graphic Device* should not be confused with a *Gimmick*, although if it is used wrongly it could easily become one. For example: the comic *Character* Lap Sap Chung was specially created to be used as a *Graphic Device* for the Clean Hong Kong Campaign, which is a suitable campaign for a light-hearted approach. But if the *Cartoon Character* approach is unsuitable for a campaign and is used only because the client likes *Cartoons*, then you can end up with a *Gimmick*.

In other words a *Gimmick* is a *Graphic Device* used wrongly, or a *Graphic Device* used self-indulgently for its own sake.

1



1986

16

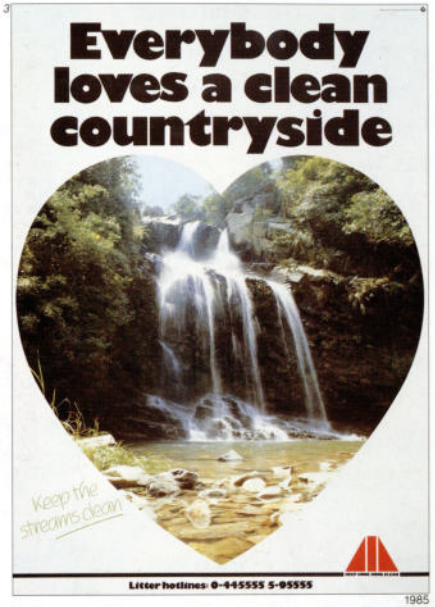
1 A Soft Sell Comic Book approach was used in 1985.

2, 3 & 4 The Heart as a *Graphic Device* was functional and decorative, giving the campaign a strong identity.

2

1985

3



1985

4

1985

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17

THE FIGHT CRIME CAMPAIGN

There have been Fight Crime campaigns since the Police Force was founded by Captain William Caine. The main problems in his day were pirates and the Triad Societies.

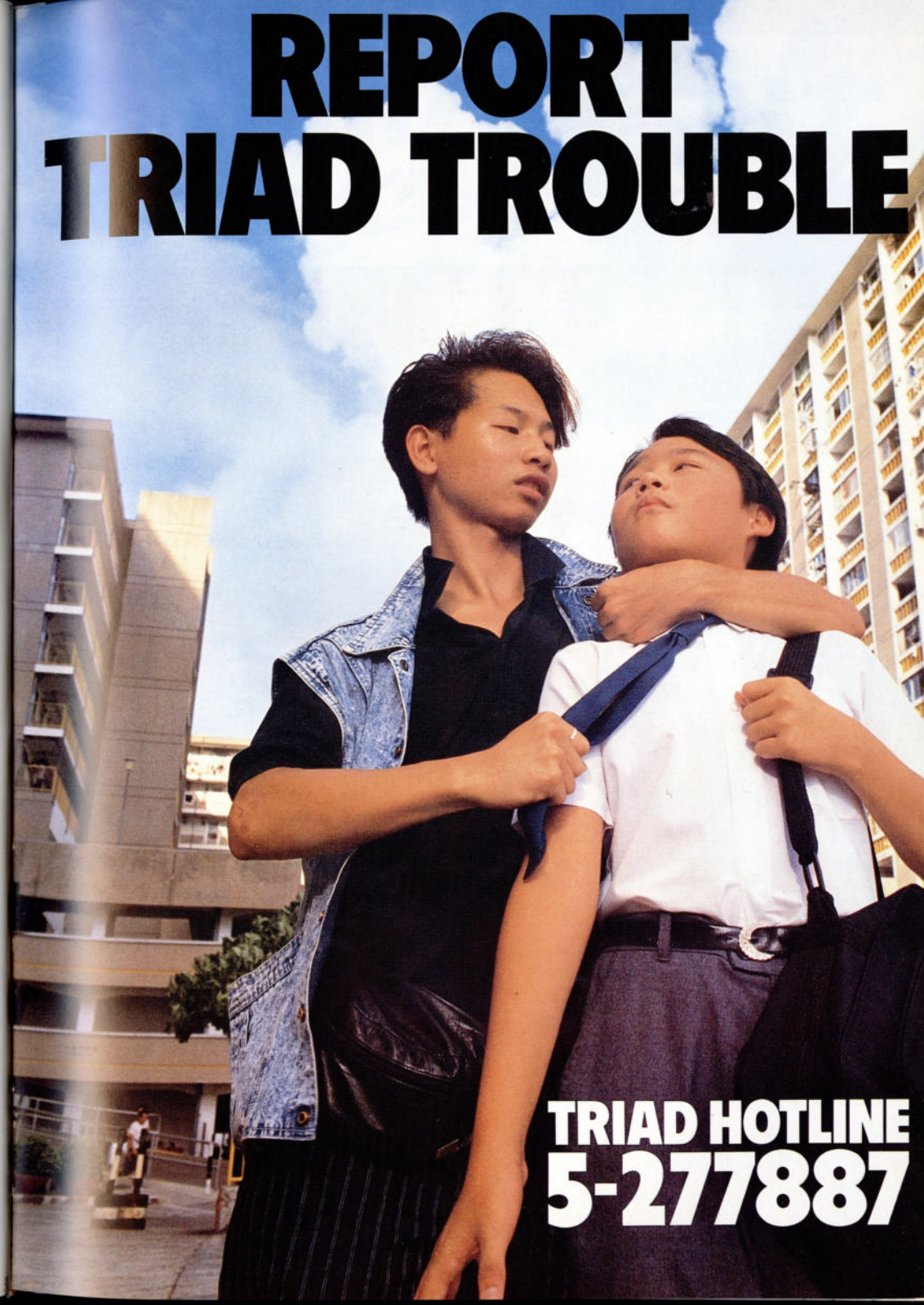
In the early seventies there was a major crime wave and the Fight Violent Crime Campaign was launched. It has passed through many phases. There is an on-going campaign on crime prevention; but the main drive concentrates on the immediate problems of the day: burglary, juvenile delinquency, shop theft and violent crime. These vary from year to year. The 1987-88 campaign was aimed at preventing young people from joining Triad Societies.

The Triads were originally patriotic secret societies whose objective was to bring about the downfall of the Ching Dynasty. They were active in Hong Kong as early as July, 1842. They are now completely criminal.

1988

1 Announcing the Triad Renuciation Scheme which enables former Triad members to wipe the slate clean.

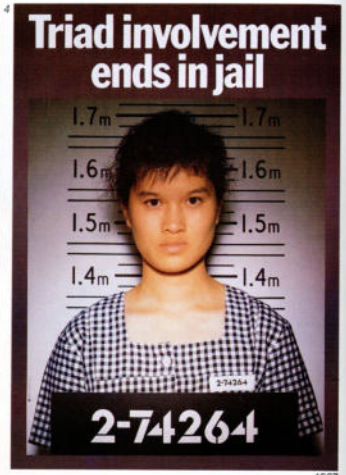
2 Triads prey on young people as well as adults.



3

1987

4



1987

3 & 4 The stigma of a criminal record was used as a *Tactic* to deter young people from joining Triad Societies.

5 A highly intensive campaign against shop theft resulted in a 20.7 per cent drop in reports in 1987-88.

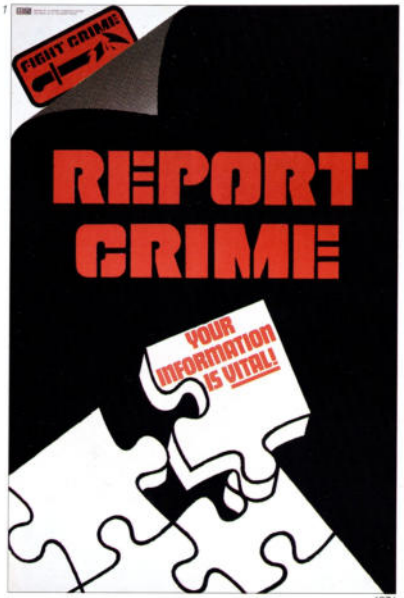
Campaign Colour Schemes

People tend to have strong feelings about colour. Emotion, superstition and tradition all play their part. In a traditional Chinese society blue and white are mourning colours, red and gold are lucky. Green is an international conservationists' colour, but a lot of people regard it as unlucky.

A *Colour Scheme* like a *Graphic Device* can dominate a campaign. Red and black were used in the first Fight Crime Campaign. The theme was Fight Violent Crime, hence the choice of red and black.

Psychologically certain colours are known to arouse certain emotions. When angry, we "see red" etc. For centuries the combination of red and black has been identified with violence and crime. It was a natural choice for the Fight Violent Crime Campaign.

1



1974

1, 2, 3 & 4 Straightforward *Graphics*, simple slogans, solid chunky lettering and a strong *Colour Scheme* were the main ingredients of the 1973 Fight Violent Crime Campaign.

Lettering Styles

The 1973 Fight Violent Crime Campaign was a direct result of the success of the first Clean Hong Kong Campaign. It was put together in about two months.

For the *Lettering Style*, we used a stencil format, which, like the red and black *Colour Scheme*, is synonymous with violence. Basic "Third Reich" graphic elements were used in the first phase with a red and black *Colour Scheme;* chunky military stencil *Lettering Style;* simple *Diagramatic Graphics;* and copy intensive *Instructional Posters*. It was a *High Awareness* campaign. Scarlet and black double decker buses roamed the streets, giant telephones stood on corners exhorting the public to report crime. It was a *Hard Sell* campaign where graphics dominated.

In 1973 there was a very limited number of *Lettering Styles* available locally on mechanical transfer systems. With Chinese characters the position was worse. As is often the case, the only way to get the right typeface was to design an original *Lettering Style*.

2

1973

3

1974

4

1973

Instructional Posters and Wallsheets

The ideal poster is where the picture tells the story and the copy is kept to the absolute minimum. With *Instructional Posters* this is seldom possible. They are by nature copy intensive.

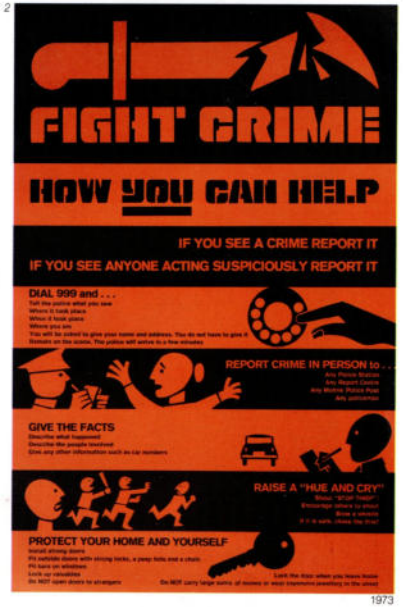
The "Fight Crime — How You Can Help" poster is really more of a *Wallsheet*. It was intended to be displayed at places where people hang about and have the time to read longer messages; such as at bus stops, railway stations, classrooms, offices and the notice boards of multi-storied buildings.

However, *Instructional Posters* are better when they are designed in a way where the picture and the main slogan get over a message independently from the body copy, as with "Always check who's calling at your door". Even without reading the door drill body copy, it is still effective and stands on its own as a poster, fulfilling both the functions of a *Wallsheet* and a poster.

1

1984

2


FIGHT CRIME
HOW YOU CAN HELP
IF YOU SEE A CRIME REPORT IT
IF YOU SEE ANYONE ACTING SUSPICIOUSLY REPORT IT
DIAL 999 and . . .
REPORT CRIME IN PERSON to . . .
GIVE THE FACTS
RAISE A "HUE AND CRY"
PROTECT YOUR HOME AND YOURSELF

1973

1 The use of large characters in the slogan and simple images ensure that the Door Drill poster remains effective, even when you are not close enough to read the small print.

2 Like a newspaper headline, the function of the slogan is to persuade people to read the text of the *Wallsheet*.

Consequence Posters

With public service advertising it is sometimes difficult to avoid producing a *Don't Poster*. *Don't* shoplift, *Don't* be a target for thieves, *Don't* do this, *Don't* do that . . . are all examples of the problem.

The 1978 Fight Violent Crime Campaign used a *Don't* message as the baseline and positive copy for the main slogan. This is a way around the problem. It is not very satisfactory, but sometimes the word *Don't* cannot be avoided, particularly in Chinese.

The *Consequences Poster* is a good way of making a negative message positive. It can either be a tableau like "It's criminal the way people just drop in", or "Lock up your property or you're asking for trouble", or the simple close-up approach of "Caught Shoplifting". These posters show the consequences of not locking up, or stealing.

Consequences Posters can also show the good side. For example, "Keep him out!" shows that a crime has been prevented by installing window bars.

1

1984

2

1985

3

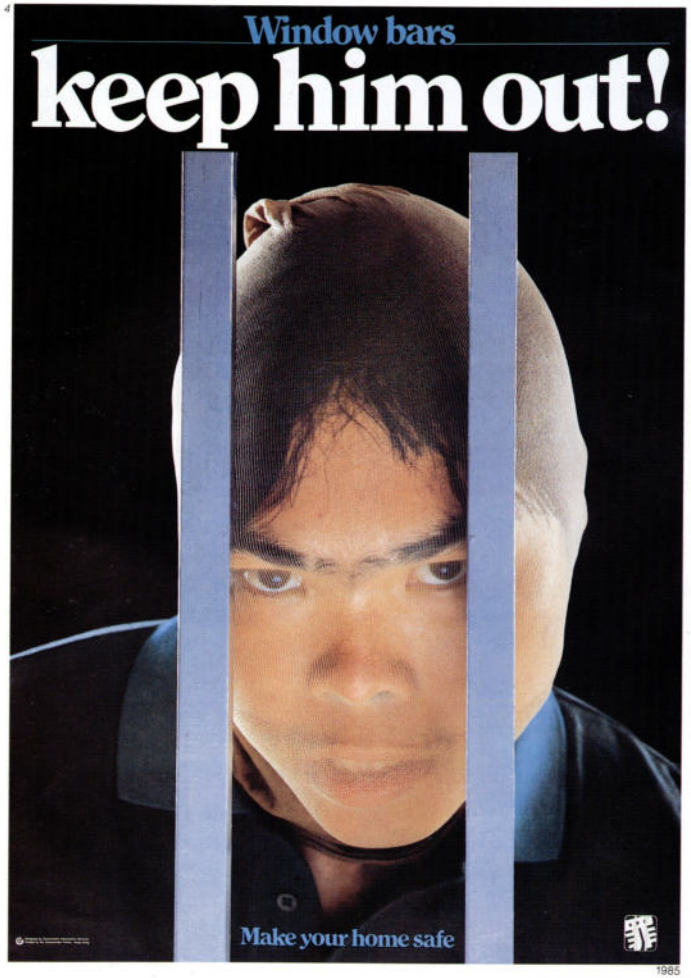
1978

1 Your Home Could be Next clearly illustrates the *Consequence* of not locking your windows.

2 The strong arm of the law is still an effective deterrent.

3 The cost of the damage caused by burglars is often far more than the value of the goods stolen.

4



1985

5

1980

4 *Fear* is used to persuade.

5 Failure to report crime is always a problem.

6 By showing the devastation of a home, emotion rather than reason is used to make the point.

6

1978

HARD SELL

Hard Sell, or its extreme form, the *Tactic of Fear,* can sometimes produce spectacular results in the short term. They can kick a campaign off. But, in the long term, it is the Educational Campaign which is more likely to create lasting change.

Although *Educational* and *Instructional Posters* play a significant part in Educational Campaigns, their content must necessarily be limited by the restrictions of the media. Posters should be simple.

The school of thought that *Hard Sell* is the only effective approach is about as naive as the concept that the only successful military manoeuvre is the charge. The *Hard Sell,* heavy handed "You will be fined" approach to public service advertising is a *Tactic of Fear* of a sort which tends to antagonize the public. Although it is necessary to inform the public about penalties, it can easily backfire when used as a *Tactic.*

1984

1 If a *Hard Sell* poster is displayed too long it loses its impact. The shock should be short and sharp.

2 Getting the size of the hand just right was critical in the Report Rape poster.

ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN

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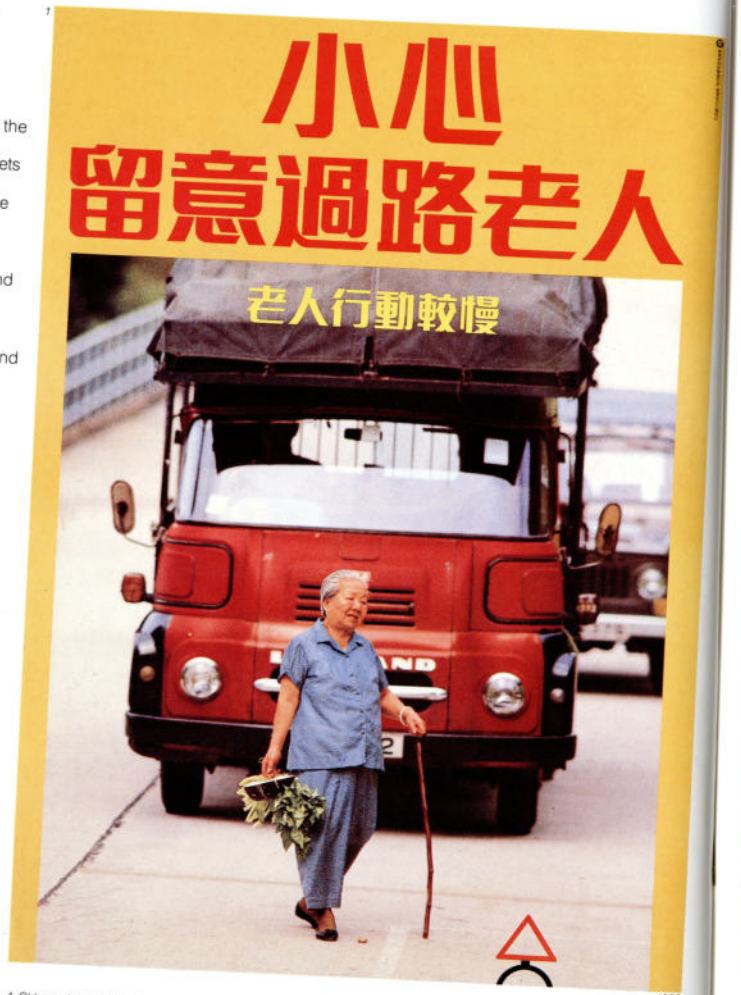
The first Road Safety Campaign in the 1920s was a disaster. Former Chief Inspector Kenneth Andrew tells in his "Diary of an Ex Hong Kong Cop" how the Royal Air Force was asked to drop leaflets over the busy streets. Three people were killed and several hundred injured:

"The victims, walking on the footpath and seeing pamphlets floating down, dashed into the road to secure a copy and gave no thought to approaching traffic."

Recent efforts have been rather more successful. The basic *Strategy* is very simple: a very *Hard Sell* emotional approach for a short period, followed by an extended *Educational Campaign*.

With pedestrians, the two main high-risk groups are old people and small children. The advertising has to be simple, often crude, or even patronizing, to be effective. The young motorist who has just learnt to drive is also prone to accidents. The temptation is to target the advertising only at these three main groups. But this does not work. If there is not enough advertising to cover the lesser problem areas, accidents tend to increase in those areas.

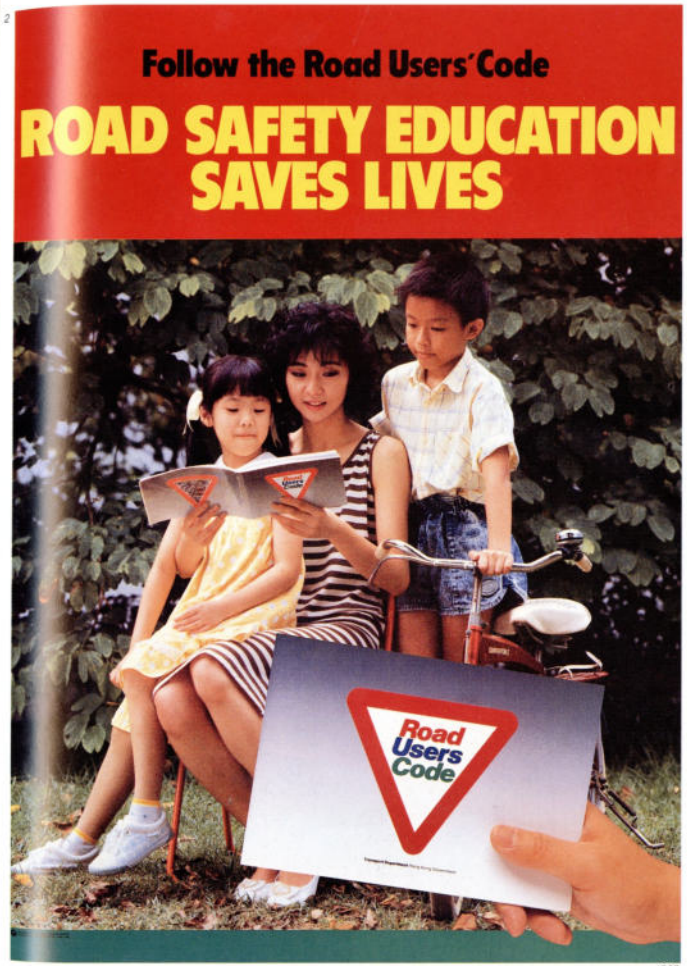
1



1986

1 Old people tend to be less receptive to publicity than any other high-risk group.

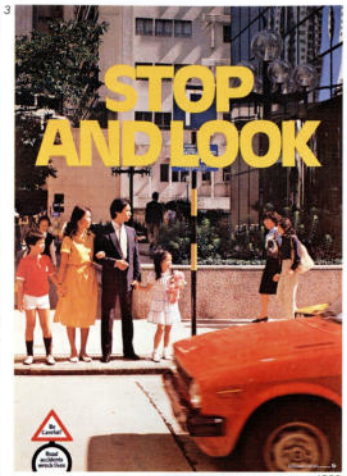
2



1987

2 The publication and promotion of the Road Users Code resulted in a marked drop in fatal road accidents in the target groups of old people and children.

3



1982

4

1982

3 & 4 Constant repetition of simple messages like Stop and Look and Watch Out for Pedestrians is needed to keep the accident rate down.

THE TACTIC OF FEAR

In normal advertising it is unethical and improper to use *Fear* as a means to sell a product. Where human life is at stake, as in the case of *Safety* and *Health Warnings*, it is perfectly acceptable to frighten people a little to achieve results.

Like all *Hard Sell* approaches, the *Tactic of Fear* should be used selectively and sparingly, and only for short periods of time. Over-exposure tends to invite ridicule. To be effective, the message must be credible.

For example, being killed in an accident is not nearly as credible as being maimed or hurt.

The *Tactic of Fear* should move people emotionally. It should disturb. It should create a nagging *Fear* that lasts, and lasts, and lasts.

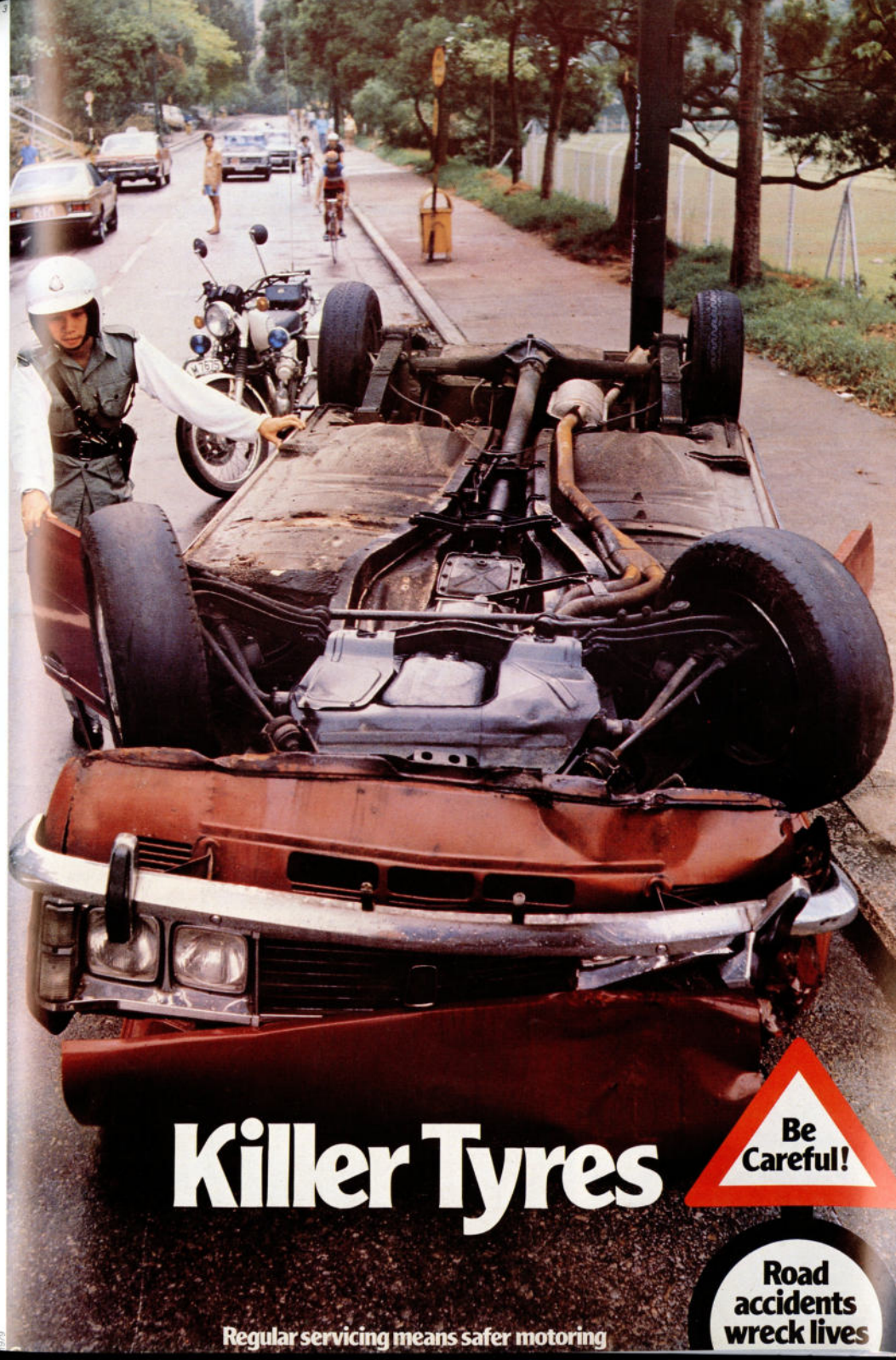
There is a school of thought which claims that horror and the *Tactic of Fear* do not work with Road Safety publicity. In Hong Kong they have been proved wrong.

1979

1979

1 & 2 People tend to be more frightened of being permanently injured in a traffic accident than being killed.

3 The logistics of setting up Killer Tyres on a public road were enormous.



1979

CHANGE

With long-term *Educational Campaigns* there is the danger that the message will stale with repetition. The approach to the creative thinking and the style have to be constantly updated to fit with the fashion of the times.

What works one year does not always work two or three years later. The market can change. Every generation thinks slightly differently as society evolves. People change. Advertising has to move with the times in order to influence them.

The basic message and concept may be preserved, but the style and techniques of communicating them must be constantly updated in order to have any measure of impact.

A good idea can always be successfully revamped. Sometimes the change can be very slight as with the "Be careful kids!" poster.

Fashion and style are important factors. The ideal poster sets fashions, rather than following them.

1

1965

3

The Crossing Code
1 First find a safe place to cross, then stop
2 Stand on the pavement near the kerb
3 Look all round for traffic and listen
4 If traffic is coming let it pass. Look all round again
5 When there is no traffic near, walk straight across the road
6 Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross

1973

2

1973

1, 2 & 4 The child, as seen from the driving seat, is such a good idea that it is re-used about every five years.

3 & 6 These messages in different styles were designed almost 10 years apart.

5 You Must Wear Seat Belts was an information poster.

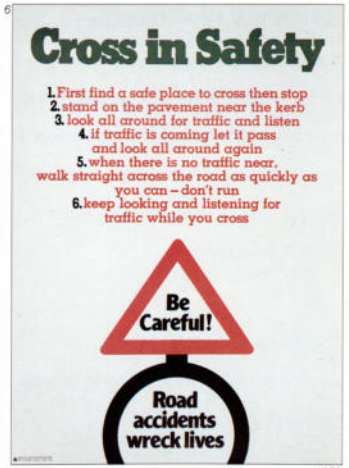
4

1978

5

1983

6


Cross in Safety
1. First find a safe place to cross then stop
2. stand on the pavement near the kerb
3. look all around for traffic and listen
4. if traffic is coming let it pass and look all around again
5. when there is no traffic near, walk straight across the road as quickly as you can – don't run
6. keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross
Be Careful!
Road accidents wreck lives

1982

Pin Ups

A poster that is not displayed is not seen and is therefore useless.

The most effective place to display a poster is at the "point of sale". In the case of "Make sure there's plenty of thread on you tyres", we wanted our poster displayed at filling stations and garages, so we designed one which would not only appeal to the public, but also one that garage owners would enjoy displaying. The result was a mild form of *Pin Up*.

As with *Endorsement Advertising*, the *Pin Up* can detract from the message if there is not a good link between copy and picture, or the *Pin Up* itself is too dominant. It is a very useful *Advertising Device* if used for the right product, in the right way and for exactly the right market. Like *Endorsement Advertising* it is an easy way out, and can risk provoking critics of "sexist" advertising.

The *Pin Up* is not often found in Government Advertising except in its most restrained form.

1

1984

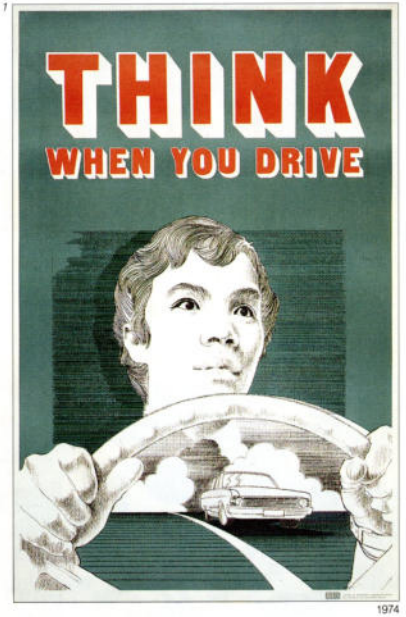
1 This popular poster was still on display in some filling stations five years after it was printed.

Illustration

Art Directors in Hong Kong generally prefer to use photography rather than *Illustration*. There are very few really good local working Illustrators, as it is an art that requires immense skill, flair and application, and is not as well paid in Hong Kong as elsewhere. Clients tend to think that it is easy to alter an *Illustration*, and do so on a whim. They also think that a photograph has more credibility simply because it's a photograph. *Illustrations* are much harder to sell to clients than photographs.

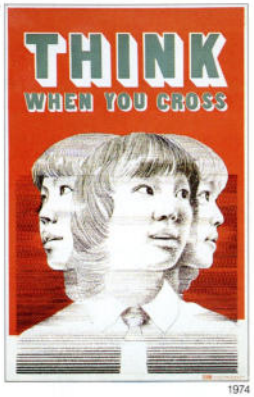
Style is critical with *Illustration*. It has to be just right. Fashions in *Illustration* change very quickly. It is much harder for an Illustrator to update his style than a photographer. He often doesn't want to. Being an artist, he wants to develop his style as he sees fit. A successful style can be destroyed by its own popularity, not so much by the artist who originated it, but by inferior copyists who over-expose and downgrade it with second-rate imitations. Being a top Illustrator is a precarious business. There is no effective copyright law to protect an Illustration style from unscrupulous plagiarists.

1



1974

2



1974

1 & 2 The Think posters show how *Illustration* can be much more flexible than photography.

3 The Green Walking Man was introduced in 1974 to promote the Green Crossing Code.

3

1974

BLEACH OUTS

The *Bleach Out* is a technique as old as photography itself. Basically, it is a high contrast photographic print in stark black and white, with the half-tones eliminated.

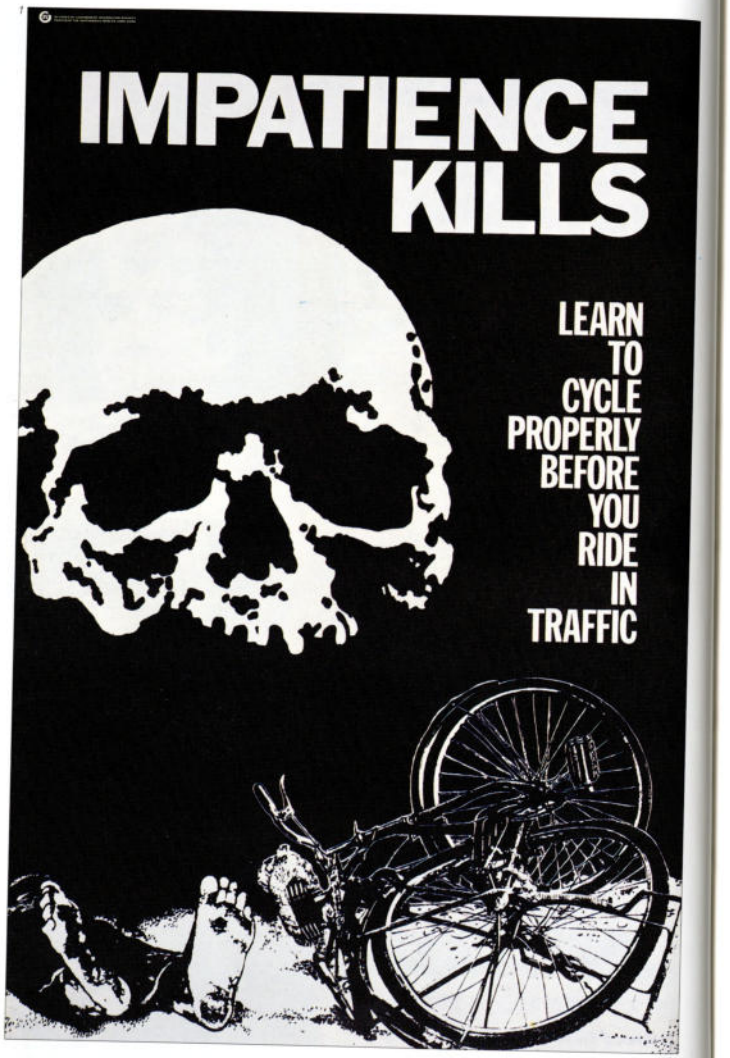
Bleach Outs can be mixed with both *Illustration* and photography quite effectively. In the "Impatience Kills" poster, the skull was a drawing, the body and bicycle a retouched *Bleach Out*.

It is best if you can keep your retouching down to the minimum, except when you want to impose a particular style on the image.

The *Bleach Out* technique has a lot of the flexibility of *Illustration* without requiring so much skill to produce. Ideally, you should take your photograph specially for your *Bleach Out*, as the lighting has to be carefully controlled to get the best results.

A note of warning: If you use a photograph which is not your own you must first clear *Copyright*.

1



1978

1 & 2 The ready availability of photocopiers capable of changing half-tones to line has made *Bleach Outs* very easy to make. It has also devalued them.

3 The photographs were specially taken for this coloured montage.

4 A *Bleach Out* of an old gramophone provided a useful element in this Flower Power poster.

2

1968

3

1973

4

1968

COPYRIGHT

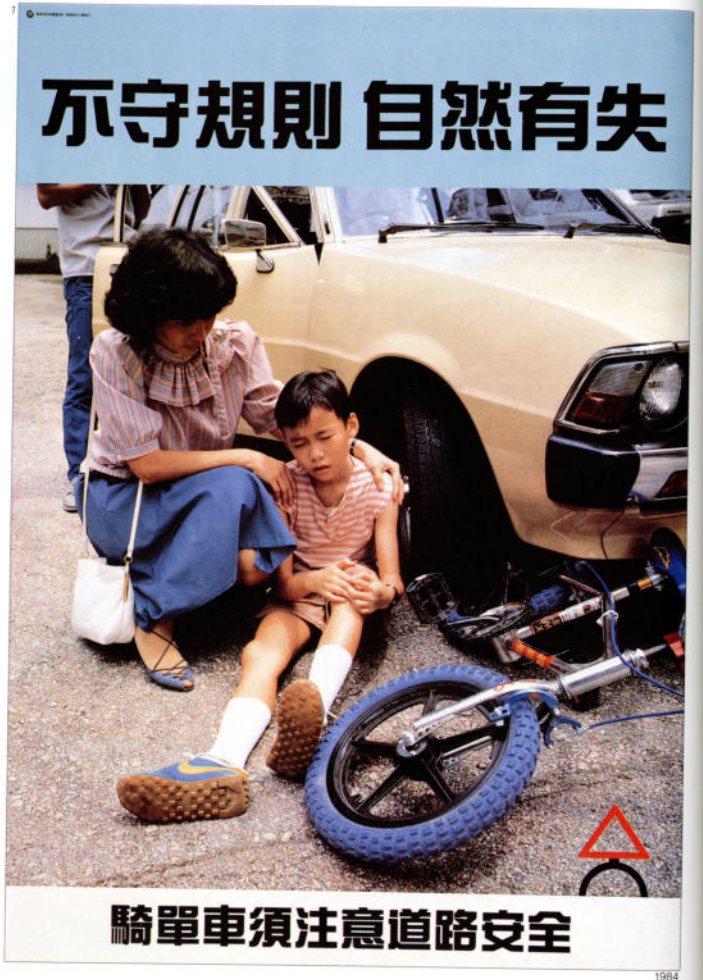
The laws of *Copyright* are very complicated. Basically, in Hong Kong, if you use a design, drawing or photograph which is less than 50 years old, without permission, you are in *Breach of Copyright*. This includes photographs, drawings, designs and maps used for artists' reference. Maps in particular are tricky.

But it is not that easy. With old photographs or works of art, such as paintings or stock photography, you can still find yourself in court if you use an old picture without permission from the owner, be it the gallery, museum or photo library.

If you use photographs or portraits of people, get them to sign a Model Release Form. Ordinary people shown in photographs can be protected by Common Law under the doctrine of privacy.

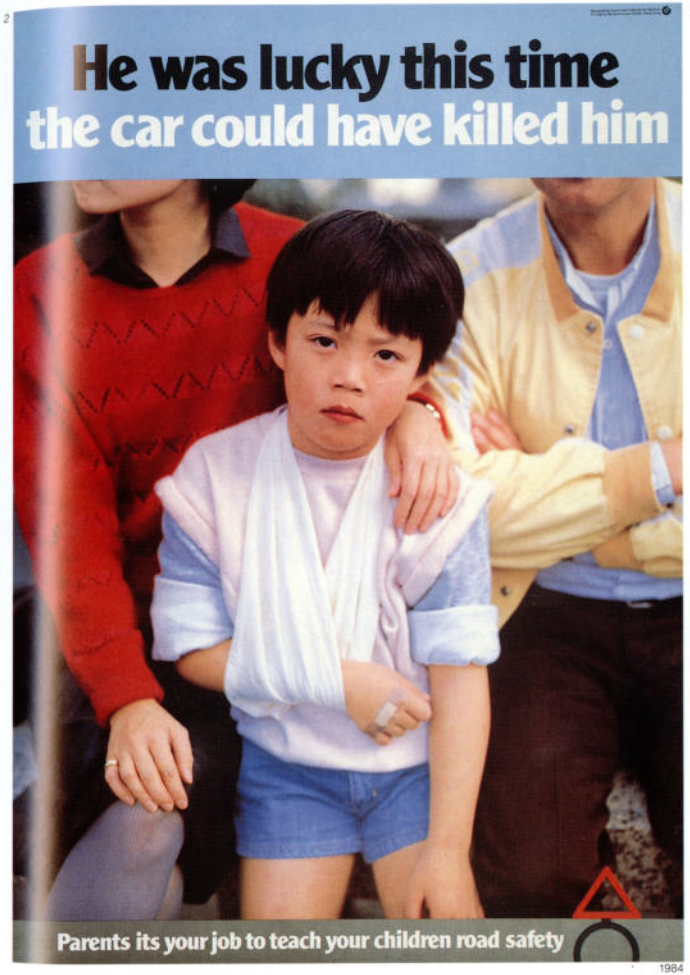
When it comes to the crunch, people do sue for *Breach of Copyright*. The awards can sometimes be devastating. Publishers have on occasions been ordered by the courts to hand over a whole edition of an offending publication, worth thousands of dollars, to the copyright owner, as well as having to pay damages.

1



1984

2



1984

3

1984

1 & 2 Children are the highest risk group for traffic accidents.

3 Motorists were the main target of this 1984 He Was Lucky This Time poster.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Keep the logistics of your designs *Simple*. Concepts which are complicated to execute tend to look contrived, and consequently lack credibility.

If a job has a jinx on it, even the *Simplest* concepts can become a nightmare. The weather is often a factor, particularly with photography in Hong Kong. The "Obey the Sign" series was held up for weeks by an unusual spell of bad weather. The last photograph was shot in the rain with flash in order to meet the deadline; but the concept could hardly have been simpler. All that was needed was a couple of sunny days to complete the photography. Most of the advertising agencies did their shooting in Thailand during this period, but at great cost.

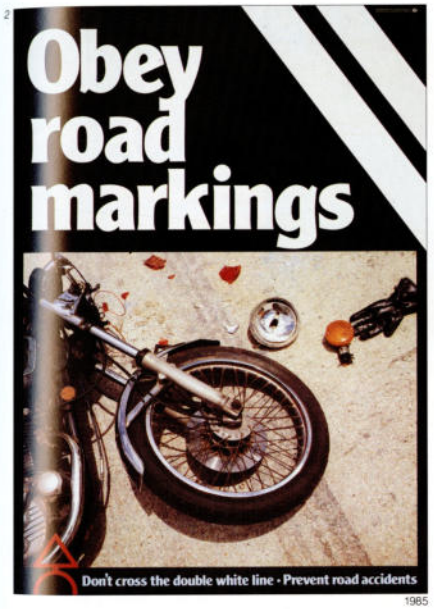
Complicated concepts may be intellectually stimulating, but they do not necessarily produce good advertising.

1

1985

1 These posters were designed to instil respect for road signs.
2 & 3 Great care should be taken to make vehicles as anonymous as possible.
4 Because of bad weather the photograph for this poster had to be taken in a covered car park.

2



1985

3

1985

4

1985

SCALE

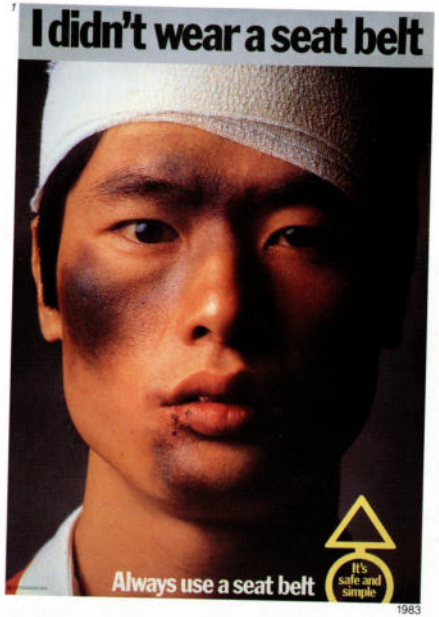
Scale is a very important part of design. Using an enlarged image greatly out of *Scale* can be very effective.

The "Seat Belt" and "Drug Free Generation" posters were very strong and dominant when displayed in the Mass Transit Railway. So were the Clean Hong Kong "Eyes".

Care should be taken with portraits of actual people, especially if the poster is to be used internationally. Some countries in the region regard it as offensive to close crop the face in a photograph; cropping off the ears or top of the head can be taken as a deliberate insult.

Insects, toys, flowers and everyday objects photographed out of *Scale* can take on an exciting new look.

The "Seat Belt" posters were the dominant feature of a campaign introducing the use of seat belts in Hong Kong, and contributed a great deal to achieving a 98% usage within a few days of launch.



1 & 2 Out of scale images are very tricky. They should be thoroughly tested at the final size before going to print. What works in theory does not necessarily work in practice. You generally have more problems with reduction than with magnification.

ANTI-DRUGS CAMPAIGN

In Hong Kong the Action Committee Against Narcotics' overall *Strategy* has four main elements: law enforcement, treatment and rehabilitation, preventive education and publicity, and international co-operation.

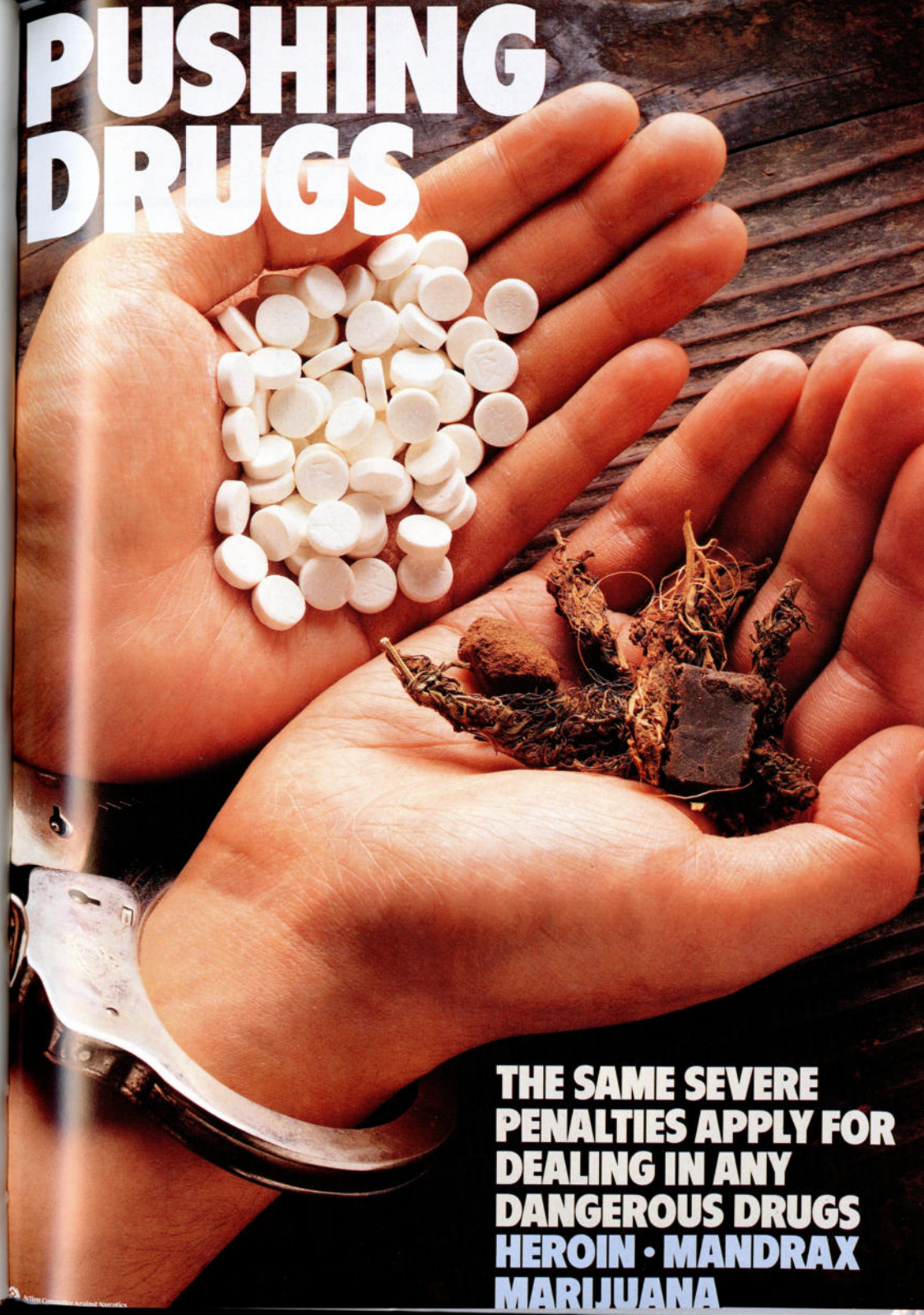
The Central Registry for Drug Abuse statistics shows that the number of new drug addicts has dropped by 50 percent over the past 25 years, even though the territory's population has doubled. Preventive education and publicity have played a major part.

Heroin is still the major problem; although psychotropic drugs, such as mandrax and cannabis, are popular. The habits of drug addicts vary from district to district and fashions in the choice of psychotropic drugs change by the week. A bumper crop of opium in the Golden Triangle can flood the market with cheap heroin. *Tactics* have to be constantly changed to keep in line with market forces.

1984

1 The poster reads: "Our aim is a drug free generation." *Scale* is used to charm rather than to shock.

2 Texture is an important element in macro photography.



NEGATIVE ADVERTISING

Negative Advertising was used as a *Tactic* in the early Action Committee Against Narcotics anti-drug campaigns. It has a lot in common with *Hard Sell* and the *Tactic of Fear.*

The funereal blue posters, using genuine photographs of dying drug addicts squatting beside coffins, are reminiscent of the "Hell Fire" paintings of Bosch and Bruegel when the church was pioneering the *Tactic of Fear* as a form of preventive education.

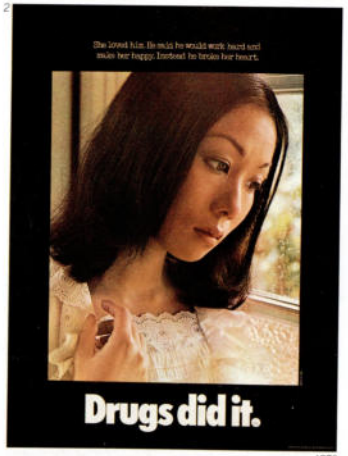
In the early seventies ACAN changed the style of its posters, but not the approach. The crude *Down Market* black and blue posters were replaced by the full colour *Up Market* "Drugs did it" series, with a sophisticated, sickly sweet and equally pungent message.

Both were *Negative Advertising;* both lacked that vital ingredient so important in this sort of campaign . . . Hope!

1

1964

2



1970

1 Opium smoking was still common in the early sixties. Hong Kong has never grown any opium; today, heroin smuggled in from the Golden Triangle is the biggest problem.

2 The message of the Drugs Did It series was one of despair. There is nothing positive about fatalism.

SOFT SELL

The *Soft Sell,* "Your future is all you have" and "Life is for Living", series of posters radiated hope. They were conceived during the "Flower Child" era of the early seventies, remembered as the heyday of the psychedelic poster craze.

These ACAN posters were mainly used as "give-aways" designed to compete with the fashionable decorative posters on sale at the time. People put them up simply because they liked them — and kept them up. Even now, more than 15 years later, the odd one can still be found on display.

Hard Sell should make a strong immediate impact on first encounter, whereas *Soft Sell* should leave a haunting, lingering impression which often runs far deeper and is more lasting. The tactical interplay of *Hard Sell* and *Soft Sell* is a critical factor in any well-constructed campaign.

1

1976

2

1972

1 The three Life is for Living posters produced in 1976 were a follow up to the Your Future is All You Have 1972 series.

2 In the 1972 set, the Hands poster appealed most to the expatriate community, while local Chinese identified more with the Wedding and Motorcycle posters.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

With *Special Effects*, the old maxim: "Form Follows Function", is especially relevant. To achieve a dreamy mood in the "Motorcycle" and "Wedding" posters, in "Your future is all you have" series, a flower transparency was superimposed over the main transparency to form a sandwich. With "Beauty is Fragile" the reflection of the two girls was photographed in a distorted mirror.

In both cases *Special Effects* were used for a valid reason: the sandwich technique to create a particular mood, and the distorted mirror to make a positive point.

It is self-indulgent to use *Special Effects* without a positive reason. Showing how clever you are is not a positive reason. All you end up with is a worthless *Gimmick*.

1

1972

2

1972

1 The groom's suit and the bride's wedding dress were specially designed and made for the photograph.
2 Dozens of tiny mirrors were stuck to the motorcycle body to make it glitter.
3 With Beauty is Fragile, the problem was getting just the right balance in the distorted mirror, melding the beautiful with the grotesque.

3

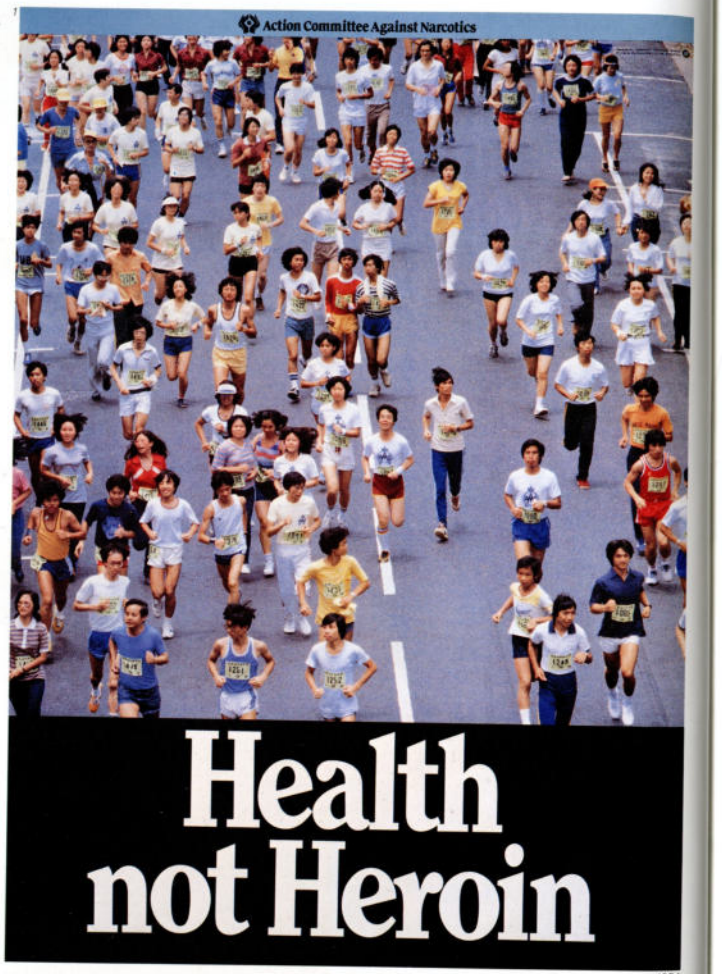
Special Lenses

The same rules relevant to *Special Effects* apply to the use of *Special Lenses*. Don't use them as a *Gimmick* — use them for a reason. The fisheye lens was used in "Say no to drugs" to create a weird, unreal view of the world suggesting hallucination. With the ACAN "Health not Heroin" poster, a long lens was used to pile up the runners on top of each other to establish an illusion of mass.

The use of a *Special Lens* is not always apparent. To suggest intimacy, a very long lens was used for the "Life is for Living" picture of a couple in the grass. Often, the use of a *Special Lens* is not obvious at all.

The general public is now so conditioned to the use of *Special Effects* and *Special Lenses* through watching television five or six hours a day that they treat distorted images as normal. Consequently, photographs taken with *Special Lenses* do not have the impact they once had, and some *Special Effects* have lost much of their originality. Use a *Special Lens* as a tool — never as a *Gimmick*.

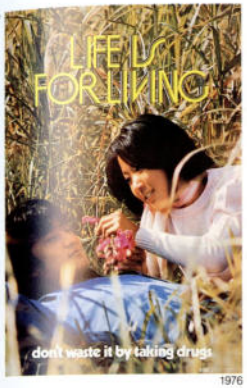
1



1984

1 The Lively Dragon Jog was a major community event in the the Action Committee Against Narcotics Anti-Drug campaign.

2

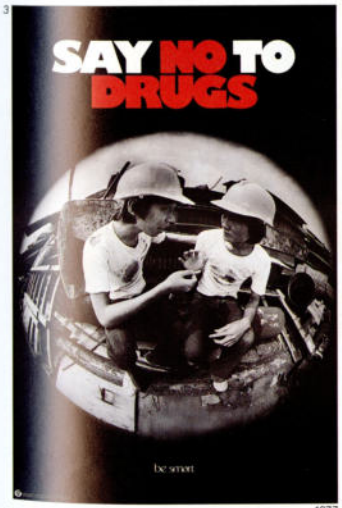


1976

2 The use of a long lens is not obvious in this photograph.

3 & 4 In the 1970s, when this photograph was taken, a fish eye lens still had considerable impact. Nowadays, even if the fish eye is used for a valid reason, it seems a bit *Gimmicky*.

3



1977

4

1977

PHOTOGRAPHIC PROPS

The selection of *Photographic Props* is very important.

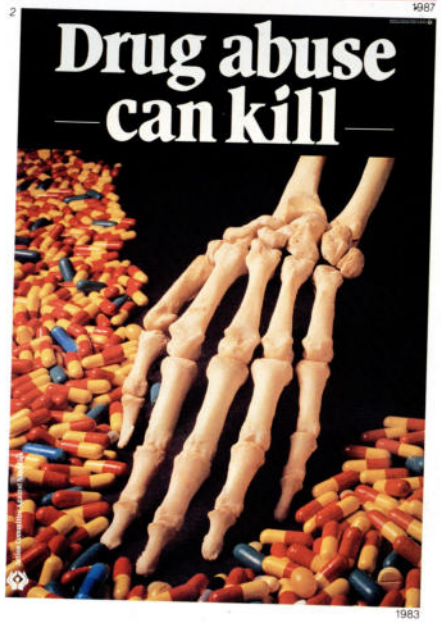
To shoot "Drug abuse can kill" a skeleton hand was borrowed, but it was strung together with wire, so it had to be dismantled and reassembled on a putty base, with every bone in exactly the correct position. The pills shown posed a separate problem. It was necessary to turn over every one of them so that the manufacturer's name was not visible. Setting up this poster took a long time, but the result justified the effort spent.

Selecting the right species of fish for the "Hooked" poster took a few visits to Aberdeen Fish Market, and the gold plated hook had to be specially made. You cannot take enough trouble getting your *Photographic Props* just right. They have to be credible. A good *Photographic Prop* can make all the difference between success and disaster. It does not necessarily have to be complicated. The flowers and dog in "Enjoy life without drugs" are *Photographic Props*. They add that extra touch.

1

1987

2



1983

1 The model on the right later represented Hong Kong in the 1988 Miss Universe Competition.

2 This poster was originally made in Chinese only; but an English edition was produced in 1984. It has been reprinted frequently.

3 It was intended that the English version of this poster would carry the single word Hooked; but this version was never printed.

MELODRAMA

Melodrama does not have to be realistic to be credible. The "Your child could be the next victim" campaign was designed for the specific purpose of driving the visible drug pusher off the streets and out of the housing estates by changing the apathetical "it's none of my business" attitude prevalent at the time. The results were impressive.

Melodrama is an effective way of presenting a logical argument in an emotional way. People tend to react more to emotion than logic. When emotion is backed by logic, their reaction is even stronger. The hot line received callers in their thousands, making the business of selling drugs less open, more complicated, more difficult, and much more risky. The drug pusher imagined an anonymous good citizen behind every window on the telephone reporting his criminal activities to the Police.

Melodrama is easy to overdo to the point where it can appear absurd to the highly educated, and it is easy to ridicule. But, done properly, it can work very well.

1

Action Committee Against Narcotics
Your child could be the next victim
Report the drug pusher. Tel: 5-271234 or 5-456182.
All calls treated in the strictest confidence.

1985

2

1985

3

1985

1, 2 & 3 The results of this campaign were excellent. The public responded by ringing the hotline and reporting drug pushers. Many narcotics dealers operating openly in housing estates were driven underground.

It is often neither possible nor desirable to shoot a picture for a poster on location. So it is necessary to build a *Set*. All the "Your child could be the next victim" series was shot in the studio. The *Sets* for these posters were very simple. A dirty wall for the "Shadow"; a plastic floor, through which light could be shone, for the "Syringe"; and a mat and a few dirty bits of planking for the "Chasing the dragon" shot.
These *Melodramas* needed *Melodramatic* lighting to work. It is much easier to control that sort of lighting in a studio.

The reason for shooting the "Disco" photograph in a studio was different. It is often difficult to find models or locations for drug publicity. People don't want to be seen to be associated with drugs, even if the message is anti-narcotics. We wanted to shoot the "Disco" in a real disco, but we couldn't find a suitable one where the management would let us use their premises. So we had to build our own disco in the studio. An illusion of a disco was created by a combination of metallic foil, lights and balloons. Surprisingly enough there was no difficulty finding locations for the "Prostitute" and "Coffee Bar" pictures.

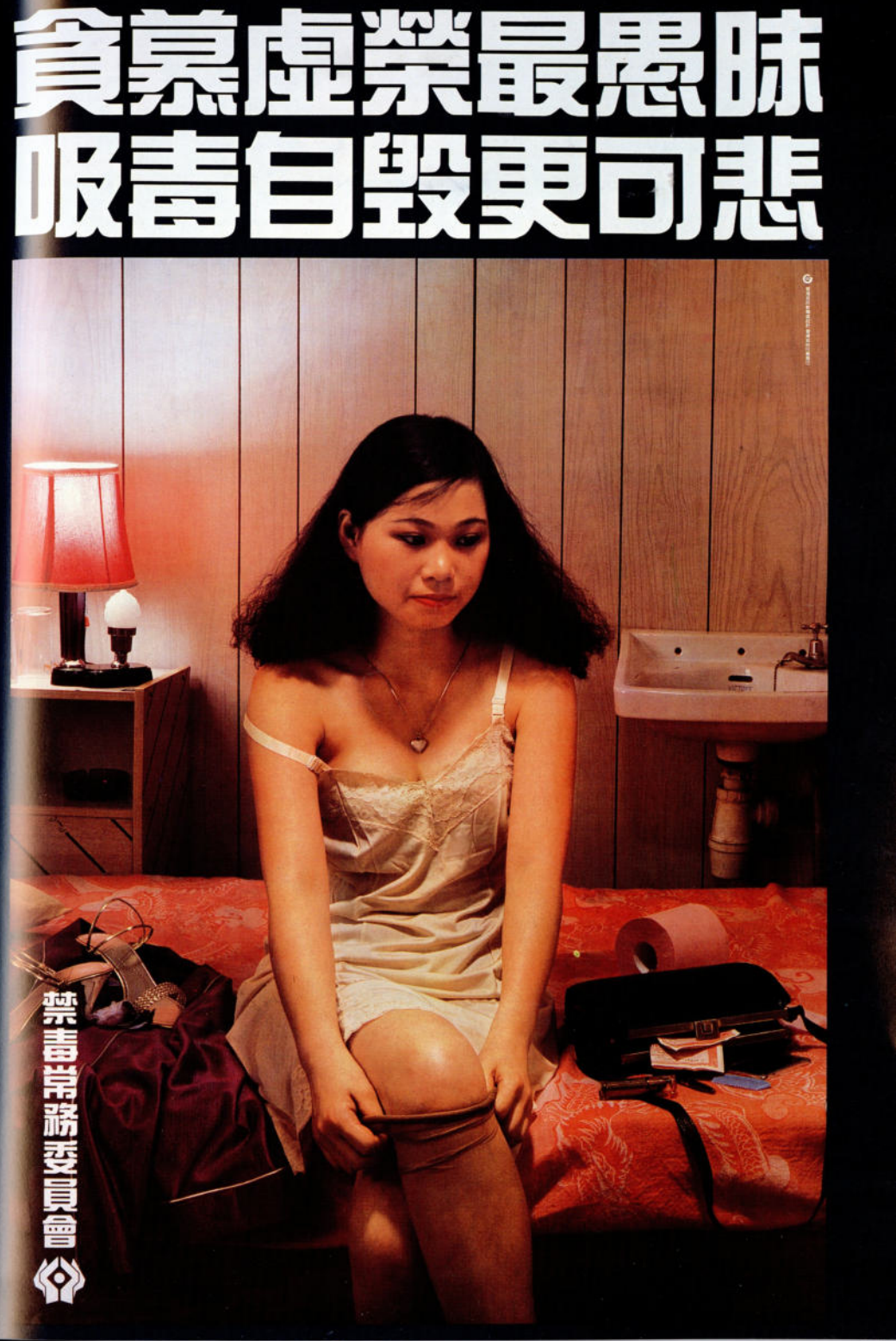
1

1981

2

1982

1 & 2 The sweet-talking drug pusher is portrayed in two different ways. The Disco is a studio *Set*; the Coffee Bar was shot on location.
3 The authentic detail of a cheap hotel room helped provide a convincingly sordid setting which would have been difficult to create on a *Set*.



1982

Anti-Smoking Campaign

The *Strategy* of the 1983 Anti-Smoking Campaign was to convince people that smoking is unhealthy and often lethal; to persuade them to stop; or not to start. There was strong opposition from the tobacco industry. They used lobbying as their *Tactic* and flew in experts from all over the world in an attempt to prove that smoking is harmless and that cigarette advertising does not persuade people to buy cigarettes.

The anti-smoking lobby were able to put over their point of view without falling into the trap of overstating their case and losing credibility. It is very easy with this sort of campaign to lose the support of the public by coming across too strongly.

It was reported by Hong Kong Media Research Ltd. that the top 10 tobacco companies spent HK$10,357,870 on cigarette advertising in the month of November, 1983, alone. That year, the Hong Kong Government's budget for the campaign was HK$400,000. The year recorded a 37 per cent drop in imported cigarettes and a 23 per cent drop in locally manufactured cigarettes.

1983

1 By the use of macro photography, the blemishes of the human skin and the dirty teeth were emphasised, suggesting by visual means that smoking is a filthy habit.

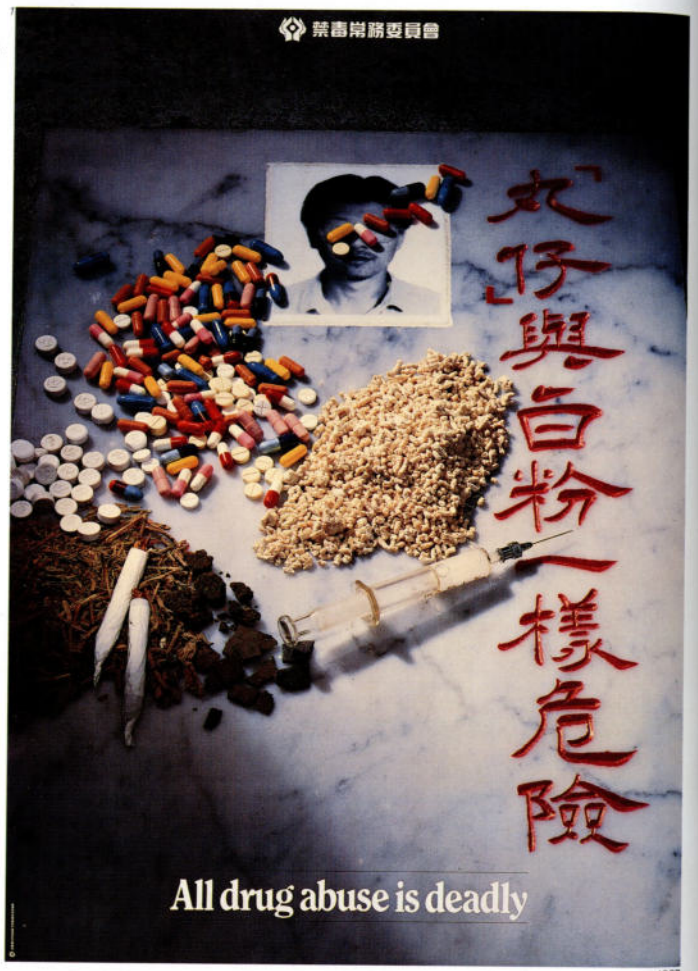
2 A plaster of Paris model was specially made for Smoke Gets Up Your Nose to avoid showing the skin blemishes.

1984

It is often necessary to make your own *Props* for a photograph. A real syringe was far too small to use for the "Your child can be the next victim" poster. So, a 400 mm model was made. In the photograph it does not look either out of scale or unreal, and it would never occur to most people that it was not the genuine article.

With the anti-smoking "Nose" poster, a plaster model nose was made, because blemishes in even the most delicate skin can look repulsive when blown up to 841 mm. By contrast, in the "Dying for a smoke" poster, the enlarged pores and blemishes helped to get over the message. The problem with this out of *Scale* poster was just how revolting to make the teeth. If the teeth were too dirty and too disgusting, people would just turn off and not look at the poster, so some restraint was necessary.

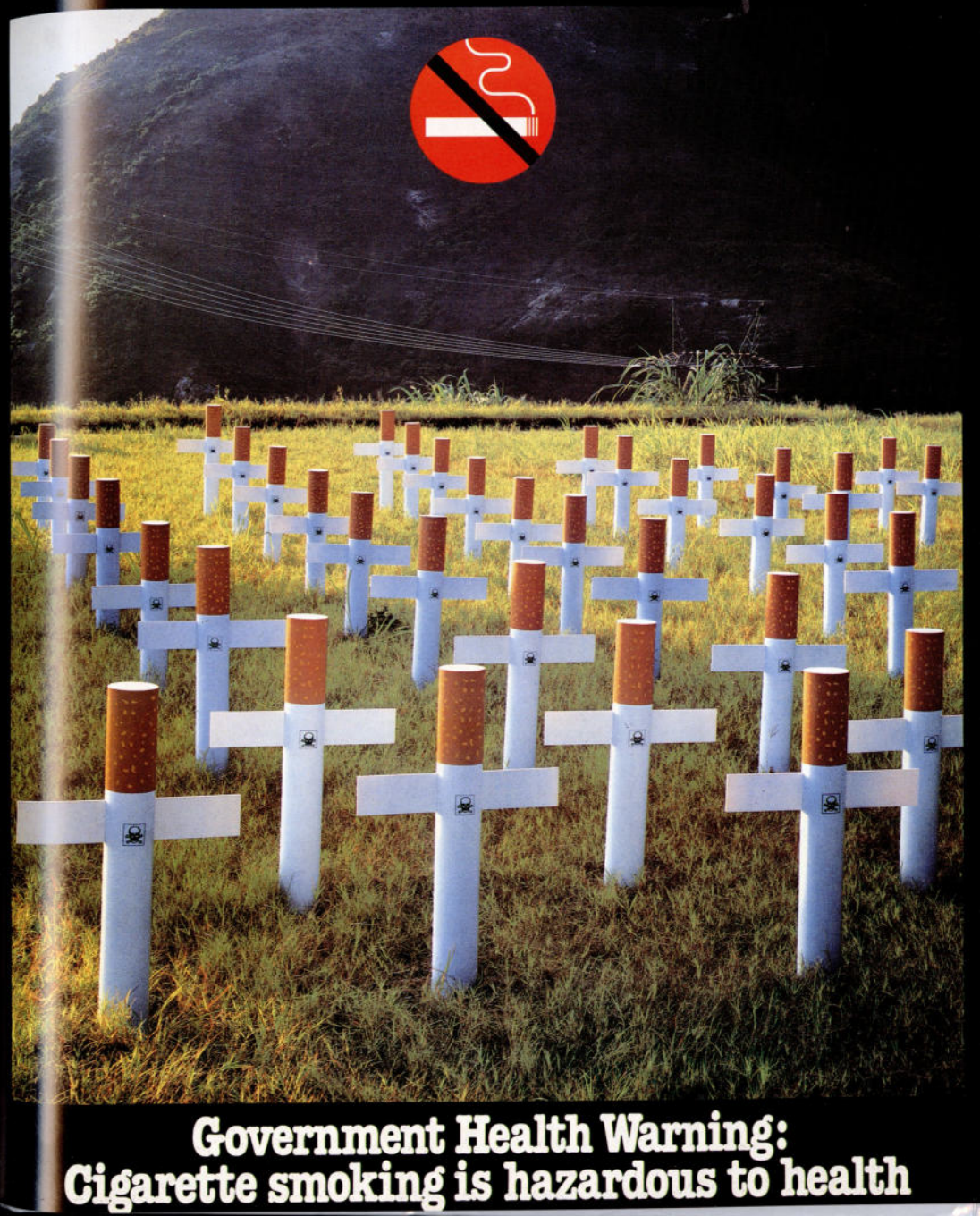
Props can be expensive. Fifty crosses were needed for the "Why risk it?" graveyard scene, but, by extending the use of this concept to two Public Health Warning, 30-second television films, the cost was spread. A gravestone *Prop* was used in a completely different way in "All drug abuse is deadly".



1987

1 A simple, effective idea, using a specially made gravestone, made a strong poster.

2 A large budget for *Props* can produce some quite spectacular effects which would not be possible with limited funds.



CREATING AN ILLUSION

There are some things which are not practicable to photograph for a number of reasons. *Illustration* or *Graphics* are often the answer; but they are not always suitable. By using *Props* and *Sets* it is easy to create a credible illusion.

With the Fire Safety poster, "It's dangerous to overload", we had to control an explosion — and explosions are dangerous. Rather than endanger a child, we used a cuddly Teddy-bear, a symbolic *Prop*. The pretty papered wall was a simple *Set* made from a sheet of hardboard covered in wallpaper. The bird's nest in "Love your countryside" was home-made and the eggs, with a touch of paint, came from the grocer. Real bird's nests are not very photogenic; eggs are often colourless, and fires are difficult to control on site, and we didn't want to set fire to the countryside or disturb the wildlife.

A difficult or impossible photographic problem can often be solved by the ingenious use of a *Prop* or *Set*. You can easily create an illusion, which is often more credible than the real thing.

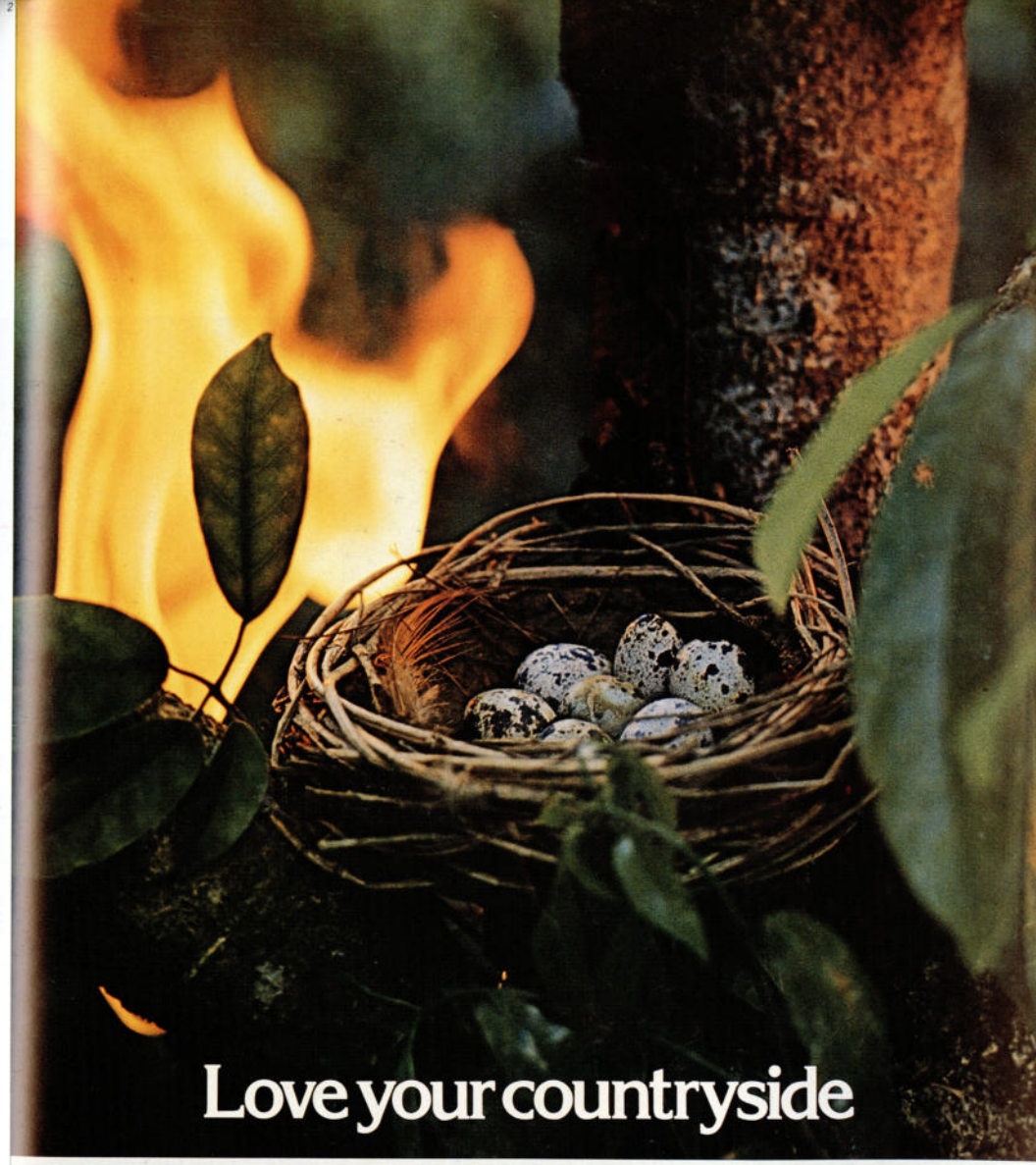
1

1979

1 It was not safe to use a child for this picture.

2 A home-made nest can look more genuine than the real thing.

2



1978

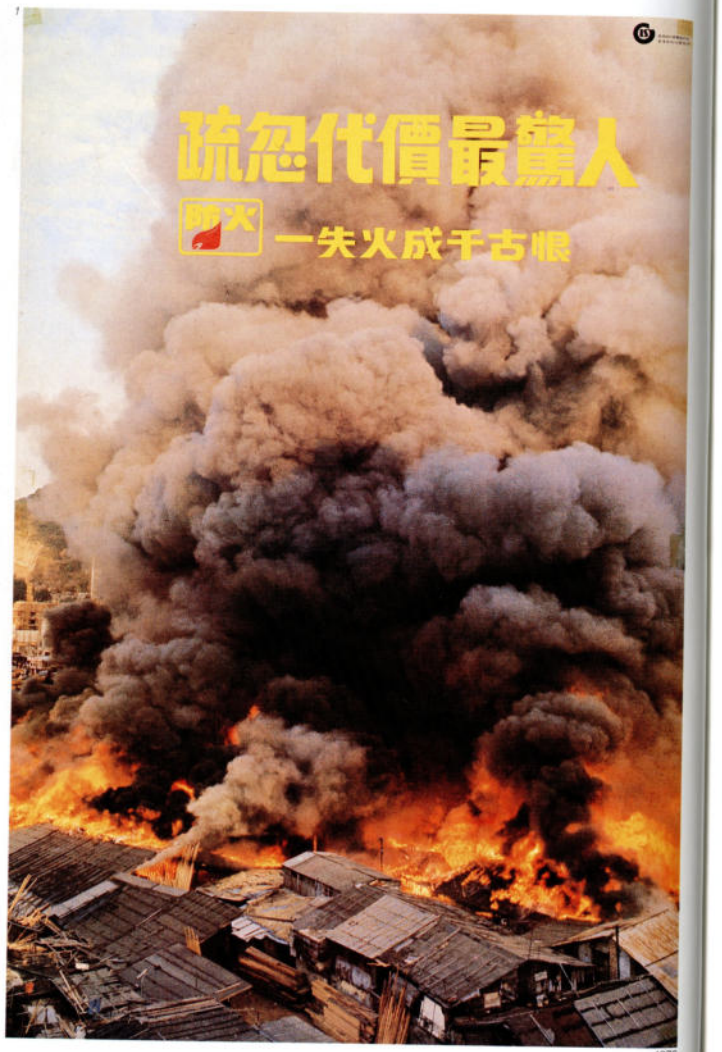
News Photographs

A great *News* photograph can make a dramatic poster. The picture in the 1963 squatter fire poster ranks as some of the best work of the genre. With a good *Stock News* picture you can't go wrong; Oxfam uses them all the time to great effect.

Only *Stock* photographs were used for the 1976 Fire Campaign. The China Building fire in Central inspired this campaign. Fire pictures are notoriously difficult to photograph. It is generally hard to see the fire for the smoke. Like all *News* pictures, it is a question of being in the right place at the right time.

For the "Don't Burn" poster we did actually set an abandoned squatter hut alight; but we had the Hong Kong Fire Brigade standing by to put it out. The logistics of setting up this photograph were horrendous. It would have been much simpler to use a good *Stock* photograph, had the right one been available.

1



1976

1 & 2 You cannot see the flames for the smoke in most real fire situations.

2

1976

3 A great *News Photograph* can get the message across far more vividly than any contrived picture.

4 To get really photogenic flames you have to make your own controlled fire.

3

1963

4

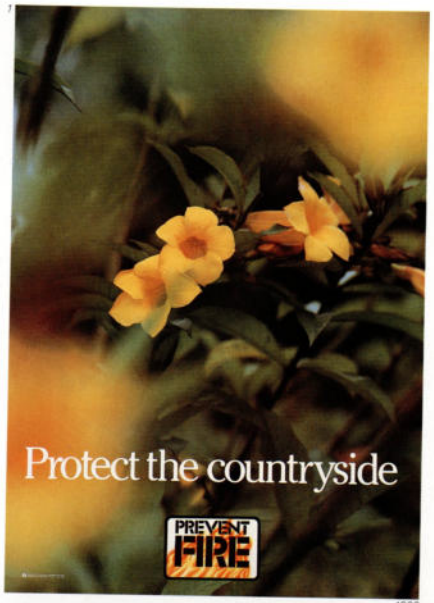
1977

STOCK PHOTOGRAPHS

The great advantage of using a *Stock* photograph is you know exactly what you've got when you start designing your poster. There are times when it is simpler to use a *Stock* picture than to commission one. This is particularly true of nature photographs such as landscapes, animals and flowers. You can't wait six months for a flower to come into bloom or hope to find a perfect sunset the day you need it. A *Stock* view of Paris is cheaper than an air ticket to France.

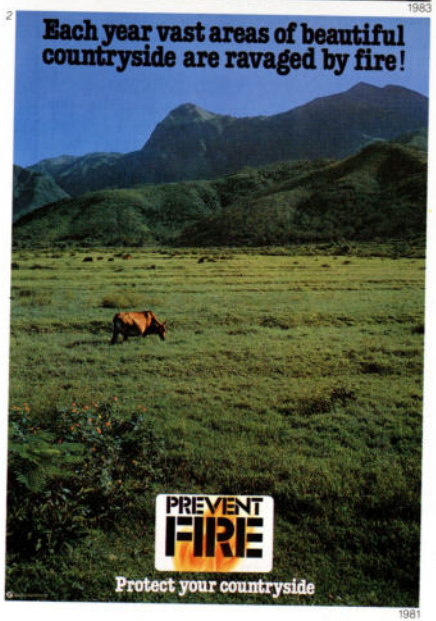
Most photographers have a good selection in their files and there are those who specialize in *Stock* photography; but picture libraries are often the answer. If you borrow a picture from a photographic library, make certain you know their rules. Some libraries will charge you if you remove a transparency from its plastic envelope. Check the date of the photograph, particularly if it is a city view; new buildings are going up all the time. Be very careful with the transparency. Picture libraries charge very heavily for lost or damaged transparencies.

1



1983

2



1981

1. You have to rely on *Stock Photographs* when flowers are out of season.
2. The picture was originally shot for another job and held in *Stock*.
3. Most good nature pictures happen by chance, or are taken by specialists. It takes time to shoot them to order.

愛護自然美景

With the picture of a boy sitting on the window sill a photograph was used as an element in the *Set*. With the "Don't Burn" poster a group of family portraits was used as *Props*.

For the *Soft Sell* phase of the Home Safety Campaign the problem was how to give small objects like knives and broken bottles the same emphasis as the children who were endangered by them. The problem was solved in the "Keep sharp objects away from children" poster by using a framed photograph as a part of a *Still Life*. The picture frame was also used as a *Graphic Device* in the television spots. It provided a unifying image to the whole campaign.

In the later stage of the Home Safety Campaign a more *Hard Sell* approach was needed and the picture frame *Graphic Device* had to be abandoned as it was no longer functional. Although we would have liked to retain the picture frame for the "Take Care" poster and the boy in the window, it had to be sacrificed, otherwise it could have become a *Gimmick* and would have detracted from the message.

1987

1. The view through the window is provided by a large colour print for this studio set.

2. The symbolic burning of the family photographs was designed to suggest the wastage of life and property through fire.

3

1986

5

1987

3 & 4 The use of framed photographs made it possible to work on two different scales. The dangerous objects were enlarged to make them look more menacing to small children.

5 The picture frame *Formula* was abandoned with the introduction of a harder approach.

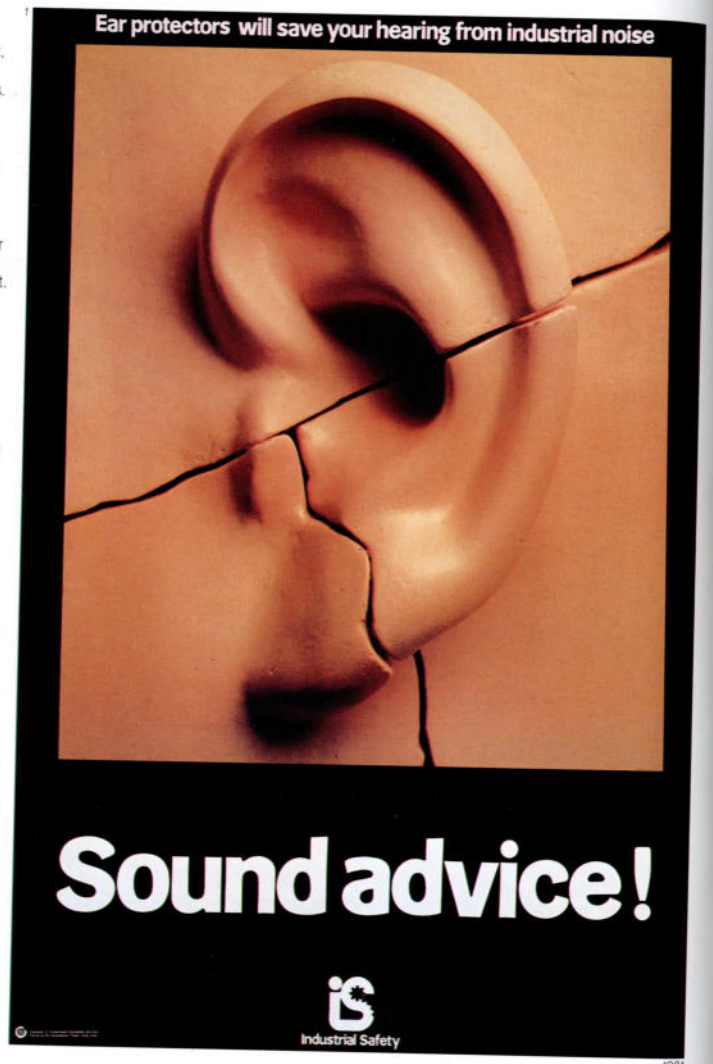
SYMBOLISM

You can design the best poster in the world; but, if no one is willing to display it, it is not seen and is consequently useless. With Industrial Safety you have to design posters in a style which the management will like enough to put up. Hong Kong workers are very superstitious and will tear down a *Hard Sell* poster if they don't like it.

There are three very effective ways of solving this problem; *Pin Ups*, *Symbolism* and *Humour*. *Pin Ups* are used world-wide for safety posters. The Industrial Safety Girl, who appeared in three television spots, was popular both with the management and workers; but the client department thought the approach degrading.

Symbolism can be very effective, but it is difficult to get just right. The "Broken Doll" was very popular and "Sound Advice" is in constant demand, and is still being displayed seven years after it was designed. A strong, haunting, *Symbolic* image is often far more lasting than stark realism.

1



1981

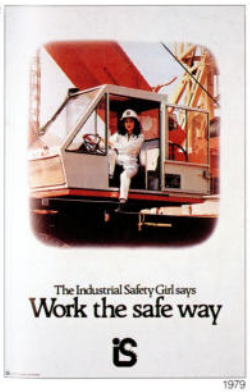
1. This powerful poster is constantly being reprinted.

2. Symbolism can be used in *Cartoon* form.

2

1978

3



1979

4

1981

3. The Industrial Safety Girl was popular with the workers.

4. A doll with its head smashed shows the consequences of not using a safety harness.

HUMOUR

There is a school of thought which advocates that you should not use *Humour* for a serious subject like Industrial Safety. I do not agree. With a *Cartoon*, you can exaggerate and emphasise a point so that your message is understood absolutely. These are basically *Instructional Posters* in their simplest form.

You don't have to understand Chinese to get the message in the "Egg" poster or the earlier "Electric Shock". They show how dreadful accidents can happen, if you don't do the right thing, far more effectively than any photograph would; and if you used a realistic photograph the chances of factory managers displaying it would be slim.

When you can't get photographic material, for one reason or another, *Cartoons* can be a useful way out. Young children like *Humour* and it helps them remember a message. There is a very high recall factor when you use *Humour* in a poster: but it must be done very well, and used for the right campaign. *Humour* should not be used too often.

1

1972

2

1972

1 With *Cartoons*, you can use exaggeration to put over a simple point.
2 A good cartoonist can portray: anger, pain, surprise, disappointment and any other human emotion vividly and clearly.

3

1973

4

1973

3 You can almost feel the impact of the blow in this very basic poster.
4 The best *Cartoons* need no captions. Neither does this poster.

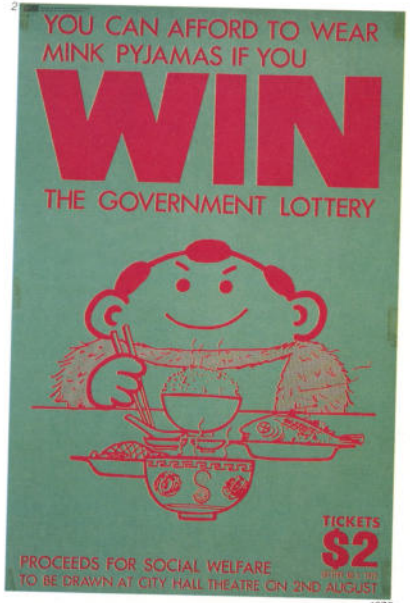
THE RIGHT FORMULA

When you have a series of posters which come out at regular intervals and have to be produced quickly and cheaply, it essential to establish an effective *Formula*. In the early Lottery posters a *Symbol* was used as the *Graphic Device* in the campaign.

Following the success of Lap Sap Chung it was decided to create a *Character* for the campaign and Choi Tsai, who was based on a Chinese mythical character (the little fellow who brings good fortune), was introduced. He was an instant success and became the *Symbol* of the campaign.

But money from the Lottery Fund is spent on charity, and it was felt that compassion, rather than *Humour*, would be more appropriate, so the "Thank You" series of highly emotive posters was created. Noble though the concept was, it didn't sell lottery tickets, so the next year the Choi Tsai *Formula* was revived with joke captions like: "You can afford to wear mink pyjamas if you WIN the Government Lottery". The sale of lottery tickets rocketed and we stuck to the successful *Formula* for the rest of the campaign.

2


YOU CAN AFFORD TO WEAR MINK PYJAMAS IF YOU
WIN
THE GOVERNMENT LOTTERY
TICKETS
$2
PROCEEDS FOR SOCIAL WELFARE
TO BE DRAWN AT CITY HALL THEATRE ON 2ND AUGUST

1975

1

1973

1 One of the original 1973 Choi Tsai poster series.

2 Choi Tsai returned after a year's break in 1975. A more caring approach failed to produce satisfactory results.

4

1969

3

1974

3 The sensitive Thank You series was highly emotive, but didn't sell lottery tickets.

4 An early poster using simple Graphics.

CHANGING A FORMULA

If it works — why change it? With the ID Card campaign we started out with a *Hard Sell Bleach Out* image of a man wearing a T-shirt with his own face on it. The slogan was: "Identify Yourself". We ran this high awareness approach through the first male phase of the campaign, changing the model to suit the birth dates. It was totally effective.

When we moved on to the female phase we decided to change to a more feminine and sophisticated design. It worked just as well. With the next male phase we altered the approach slightly. Having used the *Hard Sell* to kick off the campaign, once it was established, there was no need to be heavy handed any longer to achieve the same results. Only use *Hard Sell* when you really need it.

It is not sensible to change for the sake of change. However, there are times when change is necessary. The ID Card campaign went on for four years and, although "Identify Yourself" worked well for the first year, it would have become stale with time, and it was not credible with an older age group.

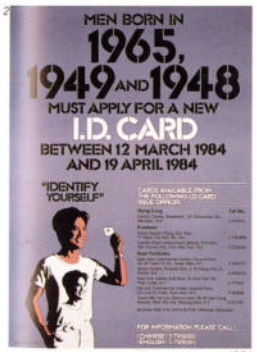
4

1985

1

1984

2



1984

3

1984

1 & 2 The early Identify Yourself *Bleach Out* approach which launched the New I.D. Card Campaign.

3 The softer design for the first female phase.

4 A new *Formula* was needed for the older generation.

STILL LIFE

Although *Still Life* is a very useful *Graphic Device* — it is difficult to do well. There are very few *Still Life* photographers in Hong Kong and they tend to be expensive. *Still Life* is a very specialist form of photography. In some countries, with a larger market, there are photographers who make their living entirely by only photographing food or drink. The expertise of knowing just which detergent to add to a glass of wine to get the right number of bubbles of the right size and kind, and light it in a way which will convince and titillate the knowledgeable consumer, is not learnt easily. You have to know your product, and *Still Life* photographers guard their secrets jealously.

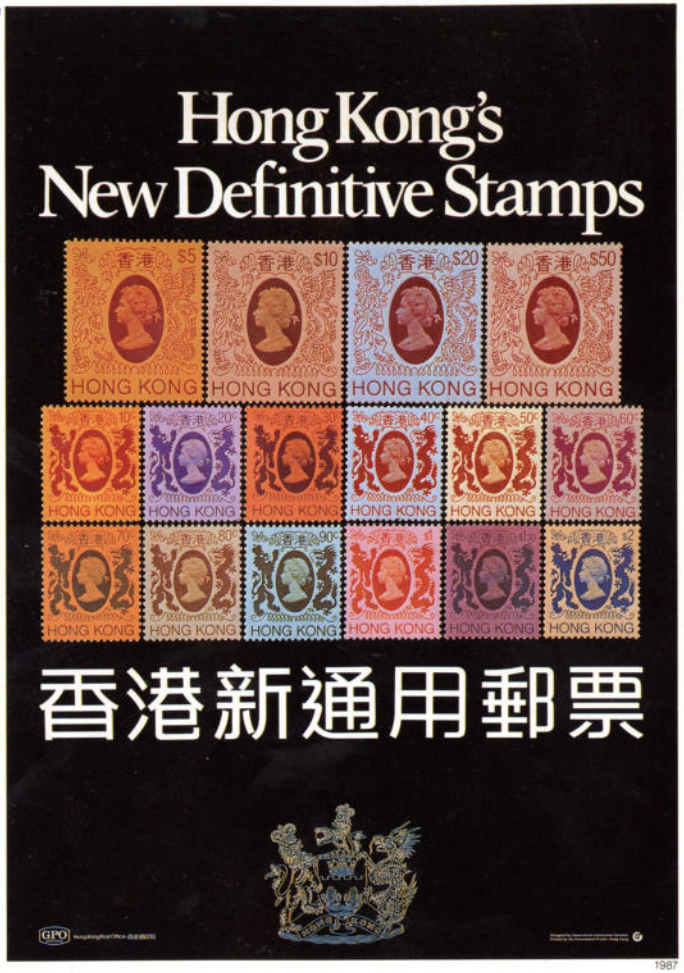
For the Art Director the selection of the right *Props* is critical and time-consuming. Here, a specialist photographer can contribute a lot.

Macrophotography of objects as simple as stamps can be a nightmare. Coins are particularly tricky. Before suggesting a *Still Life*, make sure you have the budget to do it well. Clients find it difficult to understand why *Still Life* is expensive.

1985

1 & 2 In this series a birthday image was used as a *Graphic Device* to alert the public to the age at which it is necessary to apply for a Juvenile or Adult I.D. Card.

3



1987

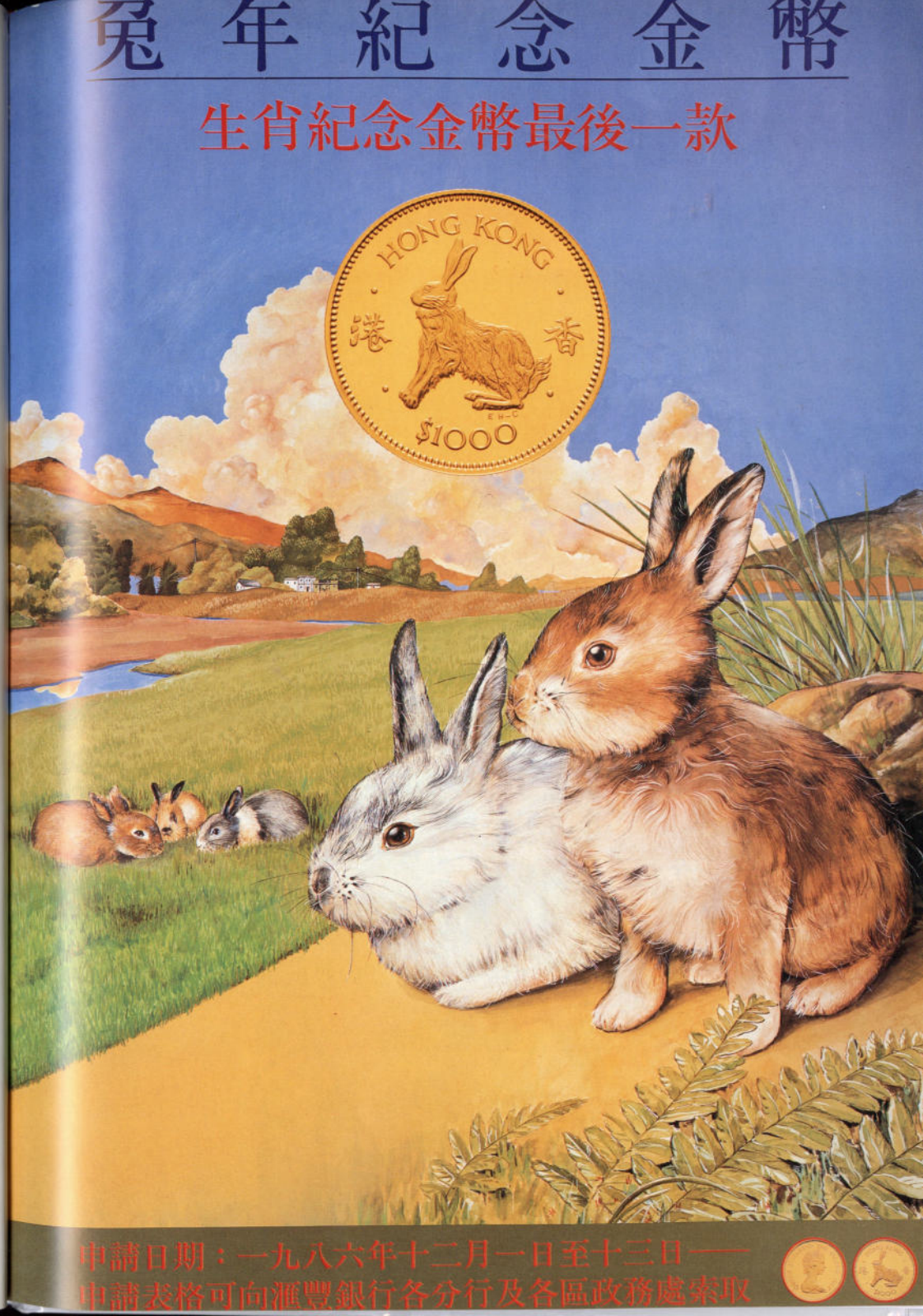
4

1980

3 Even something as simple as a stamp is not easy to photograph on a large scale so that it looks good.

4 Selecting the right *Props*, so that they tell a story, is important.

5 Photographing coins, watches and jewellery is best left to experts who specialize in this form of *Still Life*.



Photographic *Colour Schemes* add charm, atmosphere, unity and strength to any poster. With *Still Life* or studio photography it is quite simple to create the colour scheme you want. By selecting *Props* of the right colour, a classic feminine pink and blue *Colour Scheme* was created for the I.D. Card posters.

With location photography *Colour Schemes* are harder to control. It is easy enough to get the models' clothes right. In the "Protectors" poster, the workmen's overalls were dyed orange, green and blue to match the helmets and masks; and even the yellow smoke was contrived to fit the scheme. But where you can't change the colour of an object such as a building, a lot can be achieved with photographic filters or *Special Effects*. It is even possible to change completely colours at the separation stage by using laser graphics; but this is a very expensive process.

While most designers are very careful about using a *Colour Scheme* for their graphics, they tend not to think of applying the same criteria to photography.

1

Women born between
1947 and 1965
watch out for your turn
to apply for a new I.D. card.
Identify yourself.
The new I.D. card is the only secure way.

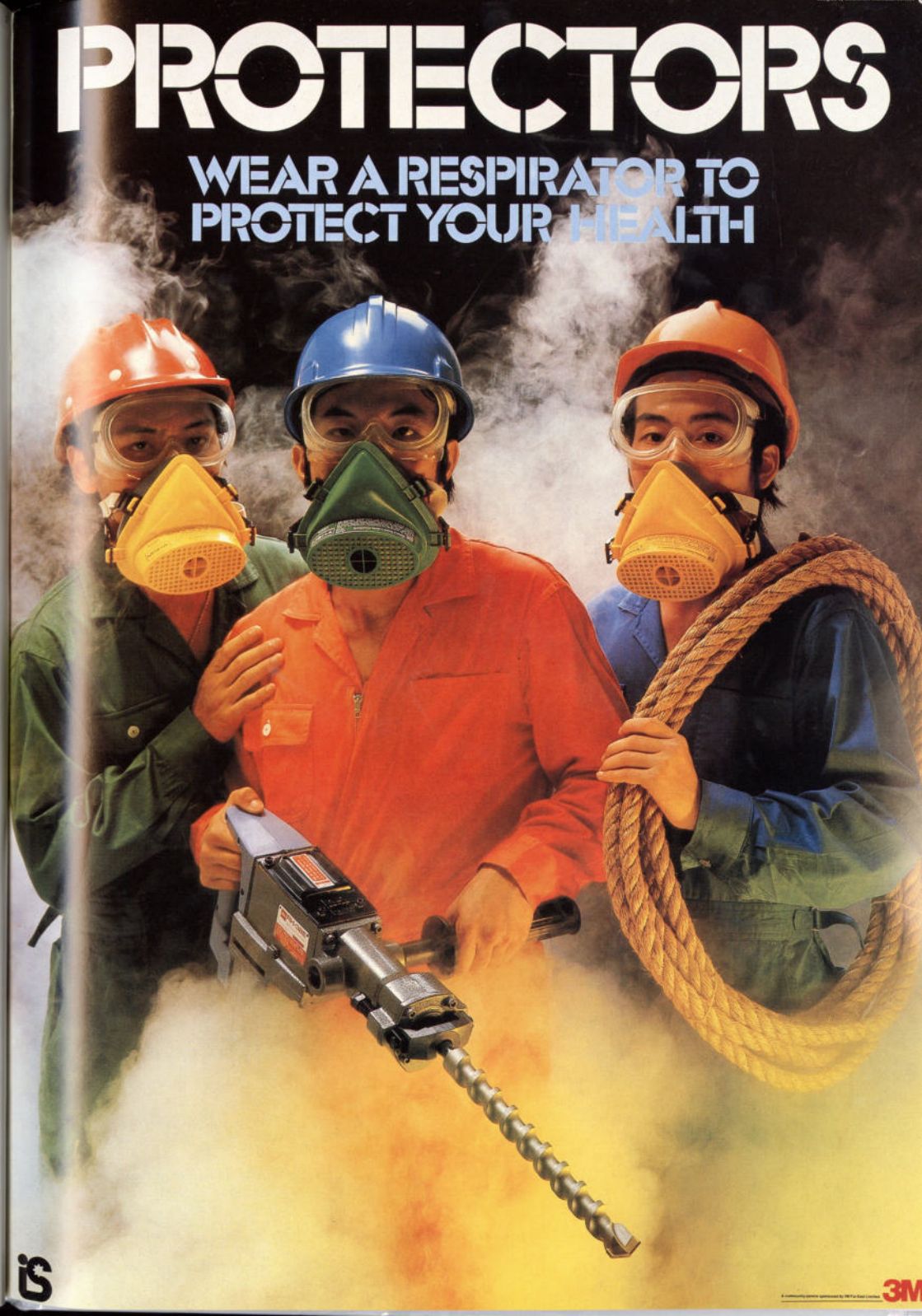
1984

2

1985

1 & 2 It is quite easy with a *Still Life* to create a simple harmonious colour scheme.

3 Discordant colour schemes are much harder to handle. The balance is critical and more difficult to get right.



There is not much need for *Upmarket* design in public service advertising. *Upmarket* advertising is generally used for selling luxury consumer products such as jewellery, watches and expensive cars. Public service advertising generally concentrates on selling ideas — not products. The "Philatelic Bureau" and the "All things bright and beautiful" posters are about as near as public service advertising gets to *Upmarket* design.

In many ways an *Upmarket* poster is far easier to design than almost any other kind, provided you have a top notch photographer to take a beautiful picture, a good copywriter and the skill to produce tasteful typography. The easy bit is that the style is set before you start; the difficult bit is the execution. Never attempt *Upmarket* design unless you have the means to do it properly.

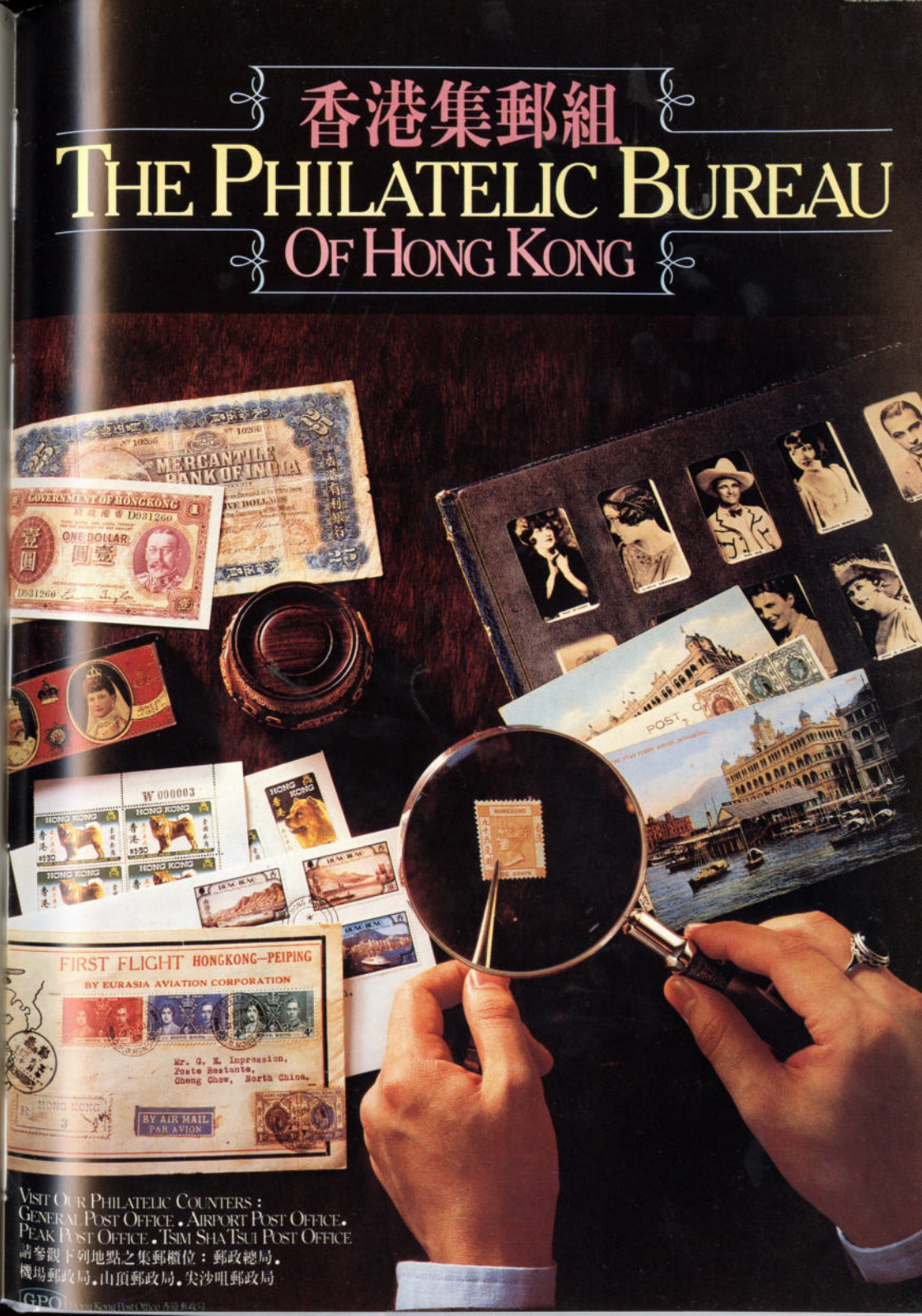
There is enormous satisfaction in producing tasteful *Upmarket* work. You get a lot of praise because it looks pretty and *Upmarket* posters tend to win design awards; but in real life their effectiveness can be limited.

All things bright and beautiful
A wide selection of quality books and other publications are now available at the Government Publications Centre, G.P.O. Building, Connaught Place, Central and leading bookshops in Hong Kong.
HONG KONG ANIMALS
HONG KONG 1982
以上作品及其他書刊,在港島中區郵政總局大廳政府刊物銷售處及各大書局出售。

1982

1 A good setting can enhance a product.

2 Simply by making the poster attractive and interesting to collectors proved a successful way of advertising the Philatelic Bureau.



HOUSE STYLE

A *Brand Image* for a public service can be just as important as a *Brand Image* for a consumer product. The Post Office has to compete with the private sector where its Philatelic Bureau and certain other services are concerned. It has to inform the public of all its services. A distinctive *House Style* has been established for the Post Office.

The major problem for the designer with a *House Style* is lack of flexibility. There is always the individual job that could be better designed out of *Style*.
The importance of sticking rigidly to a *House Style* varies enormously from product to product. Some clients are totally against any change or deviation from their *House Style*. Sometimes they are right.

However, the best *House Style*, like any other form of design, must get out of date at some time. Changes should be evolutionary — rather than radical. A slight change in a typeface, or a shape, can often update an image effectively, without destroying the essential *House Style*. Radical *House Style* changes may create a more modern image that attracts new custom; but they can also lose old customers as well.

1

2

Use Airmail Envelopes Only For Air Mail
To avoid confusion and delay airmail envelopes should not be used for local and surface mail.
POST 郵政 OFFICE
1986

3

1, 2 & 3 It was necessary to create a multi-purpose, flexible, bi-lingual design with a distinctive *House Style* for the Post Office.

4 This poster was produced before the Post Office had its own *House Style*.

RECRUITING

The skill of *Recruitment Advertising* is to create a design which will appeal to people of the right calibre. It is easy enough to produce a campaign which will generate a massive response; but, if the applicants are not the sort of people you want, you create more problems than you solve.

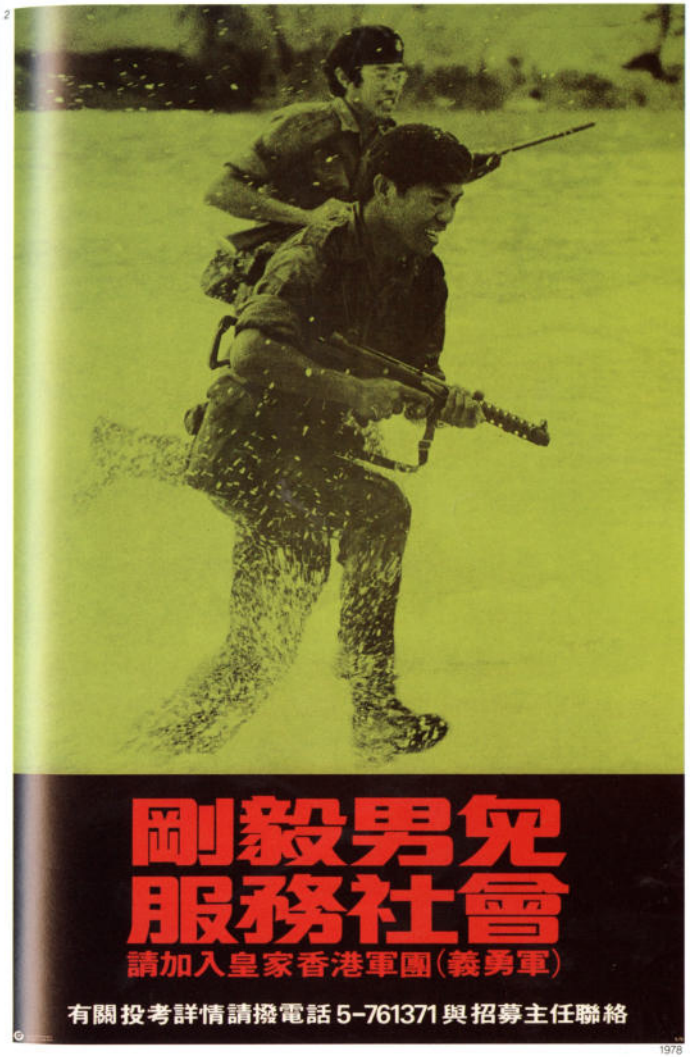
In the sixties the minimum qualification to become a Policeman was Primary V. It is now Form V; and Policemen with university degrees are not uncommon. Every time a campaign has achieved its objective the Police have put up the qualifications, resulting in a better Police Force.

The basic approaches to *Recruitment Advertising* for the disciplined services are: glamour, variety, pay and security. Glamour is most effective for the Volunteers and the Fire Services. With the Police and the Correctional Services, the approach is very much determined by the circumstances of the time. Heavy newspaper advertising is essential for any *Recruiting* campaign.

1

1981

2



1978

1 Showing the glamorous side of a job is an effective way of attracting recruits.
2 Excitement is a strong motivation for joining the Volunteers. This action shot was a *Stock Photograph*.

3

1977

3 With a *Wallsheet* there is room to show the variety of work undertaken by the Fire Brigade.

4 Security of employment is itself a selling point in disciplined services' recruiting.

4

SECURITY
If you are interested in a rewarding and secure career in the Prison Service, call 5-938455 for an appointment or contact your local City District Office for further information

1980

Love Story

What we call the *Love Story* approach is named after the American film of that name, which ran for years in Hong Kong. It demonstrates how you can use a *Super Soft Sell* cum *Melodrama* approach, and get excellent results, where *Hard Sell* would be the more obvious approach.

"The Fire Fighters" was a re-creation of an old fashioned picture in an artificial *Melodramatic* Victorian style. It was an instant success and has been displayed by fire brigades all over the world.

When the Kowloon-Canton Railway went electric, the new trains were faster, wider and silent; and there was the problem of high-voltage electricity. The tendency of the public to use the railway lines as a foot-path had to be stopped. During the change over period the "Railway" poster was plastered on every railway station. It worked.

Sentimental advertising can be very effective in Hong Kong. It may not be the obvious way of tackling a problem; but it can get good results.

1981

1 To work, *Love Story* images should be deliberately unreal, creating a dream world where an unblemished dead girl can be far more haunting than a mangled corpse.

2 Note the contrived artificial treatment of the child's make-up.

BASIC GRAPHICS

Never ignore the obvious. Although the *Love Story* approach may be attractive and more satisfying to do, a *Simple* message often needs a *Simple* design.

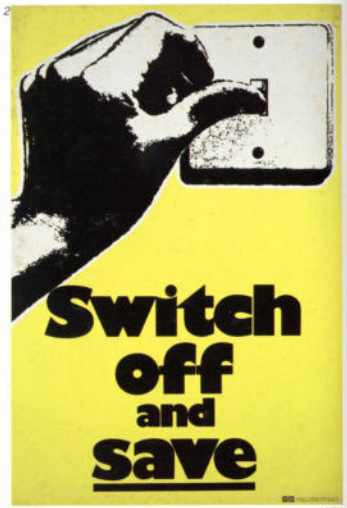
The "Save Fuel" and "Save Water" posters used *Basic* two-colour traditional graphics very effectively. The use of a *Symbol* in one, and a *Cartoon Character* in the other, worked very well. There is no reason why *Grass Roots* advertising should be badly designed to reach the market.

On the Mass Transit Railway, most commercial posters are photographic and in full colour. Strong posters in *Simple* colours with *Basic Graphics* often dominate a more sophisticated opposition. Although they do not have the same emotive appeal, their strength is in their simplicity and they stand out. Where high awareness is an important factor and the message is straightforward, *Basic Graphics* are often the answer.

3

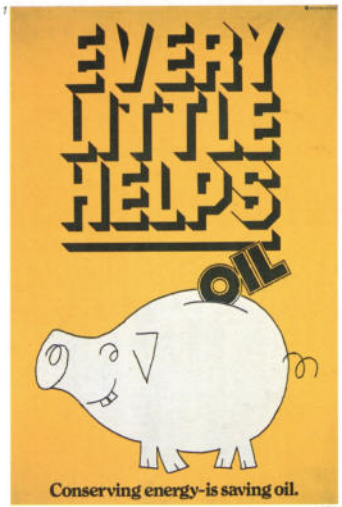
1975

2



1974

1



1979

1 & 2 The piggy-bank *Cartoon Character* proved to be more popular than the earlier *Bleach Out*, the simple yellow and black *Colour Scheme* was retained.

3 Apart from some slight evolutionary changes this *Symbol* is still being used.

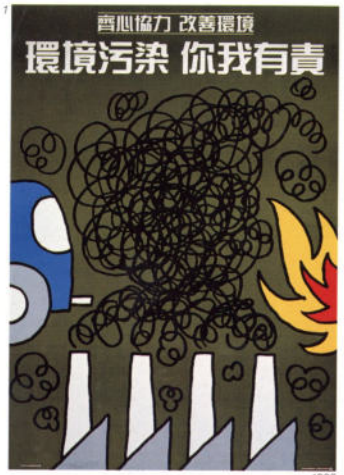
THE UNPHOTOGENIC

Some things are impossible to photograph — noise is an obvious example. The problem can be often solved by the use of a *Graphic*, *Cartoon*, *Illustration* or *Symbol*.

With "Noise is Pollution", the answer was a *"Basic Graphic"*. In the "Pollution is Caused by People" series, noise is portrayed even more vividly by the use of *Cartoons*. These very effective *Cartoons* were also used for leaflets and animated television spots.

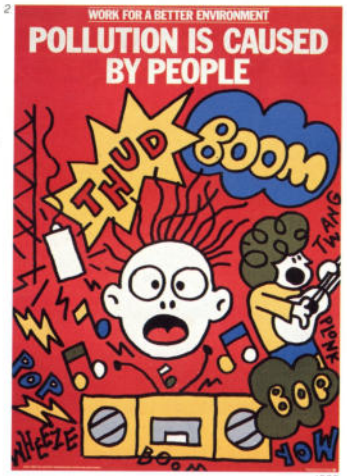
The style of the *Cartoons* was particularly important. They had to be crude to be effective — and funny to be remembered. With *Cartoons* and *Illustrations*, selection of style is of paramount importance. A more sophisticated or gentler approach could have been less effective.

1



1986

2



1986

3

1975

1 & 2 Because you have licence to exaggerate, *Cartoons* are a practical way of portraying smoke and noise.

3 A simple *Graphic* is used to put over a basic message. In 1975, noise as a form of pollution was an unfamiliar concept.

POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE

When faced with a problem like designing a poster for Water Safety, the right approach was very important. "Play safe — learn to swim first" could have been designed either as a *Positive* or a *Negative* poster. We chose to use the *Tactic of Fear* which showed the consequences of not being able to swim. A *High Awareness* poster was needed at that time.

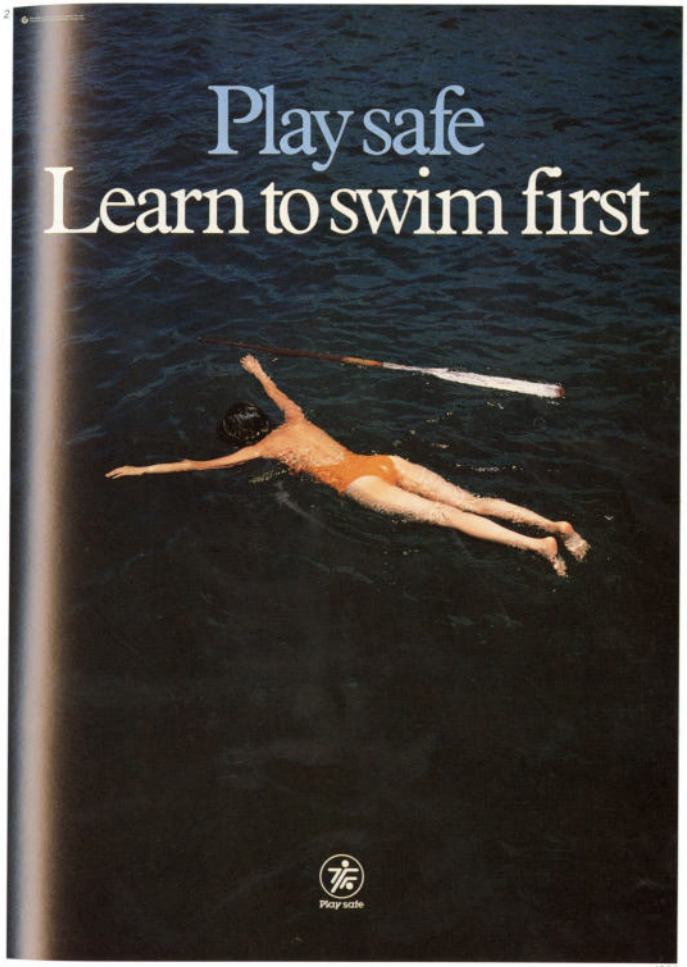
Later, we made a television spot using the *Soft Sell* approach, because the circumstances changed. It is now easy to take swimming lessons because there are plenty of classes; so we used the theme "Swimming is Fun" to encourage children to learn to swim. Likewise, the *Tactic of Fear* would have been the wrong approach for the "Water Sports Safety Day" poster. Dead bodies floating in the water is not a good way to persuade young people to come to a Water Safety sporting event.

A simple, copy-intensive *Instructional* poster was the obvious approach for *Rowing Safety Hints*. Ideally, posters should have as few words as possible. Where it is necessary to use a lot of words to get the message over, it is best if you can keep the pictorial content or graphics simple.

1

1982

2



1985

3

1980

1 A *Positive Instructional* poster featuring a list of safety hints.

2 A *Negative* approach to the same subject uses the *Tactic of Fear* to get the message across.

3 Fun is the theme for this Water Safety Day poster.

RESEARCH

Research is important; but should not be slavishly followed. It tends to show what has worked well in the past. Your *Research* may show that *Humour* is the best approach for a product, so the temptation is to use *Humour*. But if your competitors are using *Humour* you may achieve more by going against the trend.

The Metrication Campaign's *Research* was based on the experience of successful Metrication Campaigns abroad, which showed that you get better results if the equivalents of the Imperial and Metric Systems are not included in the advertising. This, when put to the test, proved to be wrong for the Hong Kong market.

The "We've Gone Metric" poster followed the findings of the research. In the later "Think centimetres" poster, a table comparing inches to centimetres was included. "A Fair Measure", the scale showing kilograms, pounds and catties, was a *Manufactured Prop*.

1

Think centimetres
厘米做單位 長度更易計
Common TV Screen Measurement 常見電視螢光幕
1 centimetre 厘米 (cm) = 0.4 inch 吋
1 inch 吋 = 2.54 centimetre 厘米 (cm)
36 cm = 14 in.
50 cm = 20 in.
40 cm = 16 in.
56 cm = 22 in.
46 cm = 18 in.
66 cm = 26 in.
40cm
metrication committee
度量衡十進制委員會

1984

2

1983

Research is valuable. It is also expensive and often unaffordable for a single poster. It should be used intelligently — it is not sacrosanct. Creative thinking, gut-feeling, practical considerations and the need for a new approach, can often produce better results.

1 A table shows the Imperial and Metric equivalents. The television screen and tape measure were printed actual size.
2 The cartons of milk were life size; but no tables were included.
3 The equivalents for kilograms, pounds and catties are shown on the scale.

3

1984

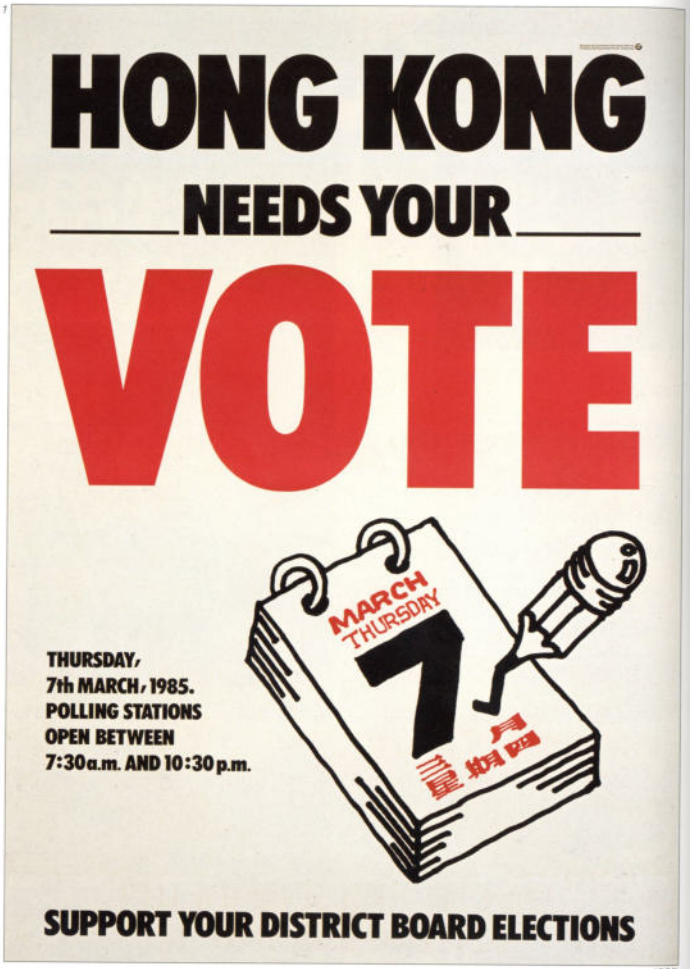
ELECTION ADVERTISING

Government's public service *Election Advertising* is restricted by the necessity to be scrupulously fair.

It must not say anything that could be interpreted as favouring any single candidate. In most countries it is the political parties and the candidates (who can be as partisan as they like) who are the driving force behind *Election Advertising*. In Hong Kong the Government has shouldered the responsibility.

Election Day Advertising is simpler than *Registration Advertising* as it deals with straightforward information. The "Hong Kong needs your Vote" poster, showing clearly the date of election day, and appealing for support, is about as far as Government can go while remaining impartial.

1



1985

2

1984

3

1983

1 A very straightforward, clear *Graphic* focusing on the election date.

2 A different approach is used to persuade people to register as electors.

3 Photography and *Graphics* can be combined.

Events Posters

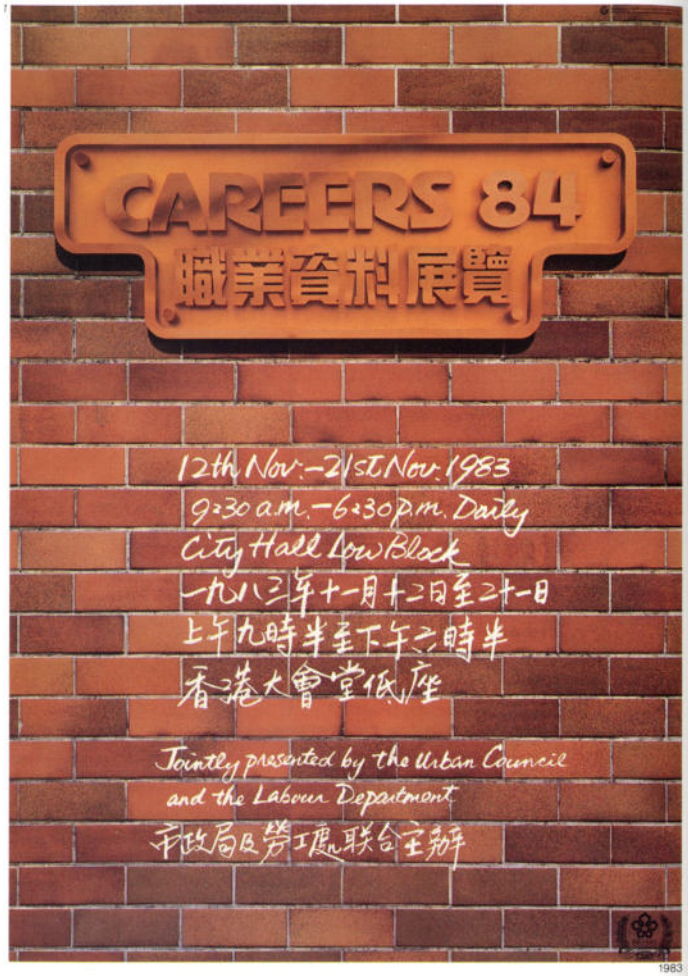
The designer is not always able to get suitable photographic material to illustrate an *Events* poster. If there is good existing material, the problem is solved; if not, there is an opportunity for some ingenious *Graphics* or *Illustration*. Client prejudice against the use of *Illustration* is less apparent with *Events* posters.

Almost every poster advertising an event in Hong Kong has to be in both English and Chinese. This means that you have twice as much copy for your poster as you would have in a single language society — and *Events* posters are very wordy.

The basic rule with any copy intensive poster is to make the *Graphics* strong and simple.

The answer is good, economic *Copywriting*. A good copywriter can often trim the words down to a manageable length. Clarity, like brevity, is important. "1 Aug 1988" is easier to read than "August 1st., 1988". It also takes up less space.

1



1983

2

1988

3

1988

1 An imaginative way of designing a bi-lingual poster without giving a cluttered appearance.

2 Chinese characters can be used vertically on a single-language poster.

3 A different style is used for the Australian market.

Ideally, *Copy* should be as brief as possible. You should be able to read any poster at one blink. This is seldom possible with *Information* and *Events* posters.

It is best if the *Copy* and *Graphics* can be developed together. Too often the designer is given a piece of existing *Copy* and asked to create a visual. Conversely, the copywriter may be told to write a slogan for a finished design. Of course, you have to start somewhere. The secret is team work and close co-operation between designer and copywriter.

There is a school of thought which suggests that all public service posters should be textbook examples of perfect grammar because they are produced by the Government. As most good copywriting is slang, or a play on words, it would be impossible to follow such a rigid policy and produce good advertising.

An inspired piece of *Copy* can break every rule in the book and still work very effectivly.

1

1974

2

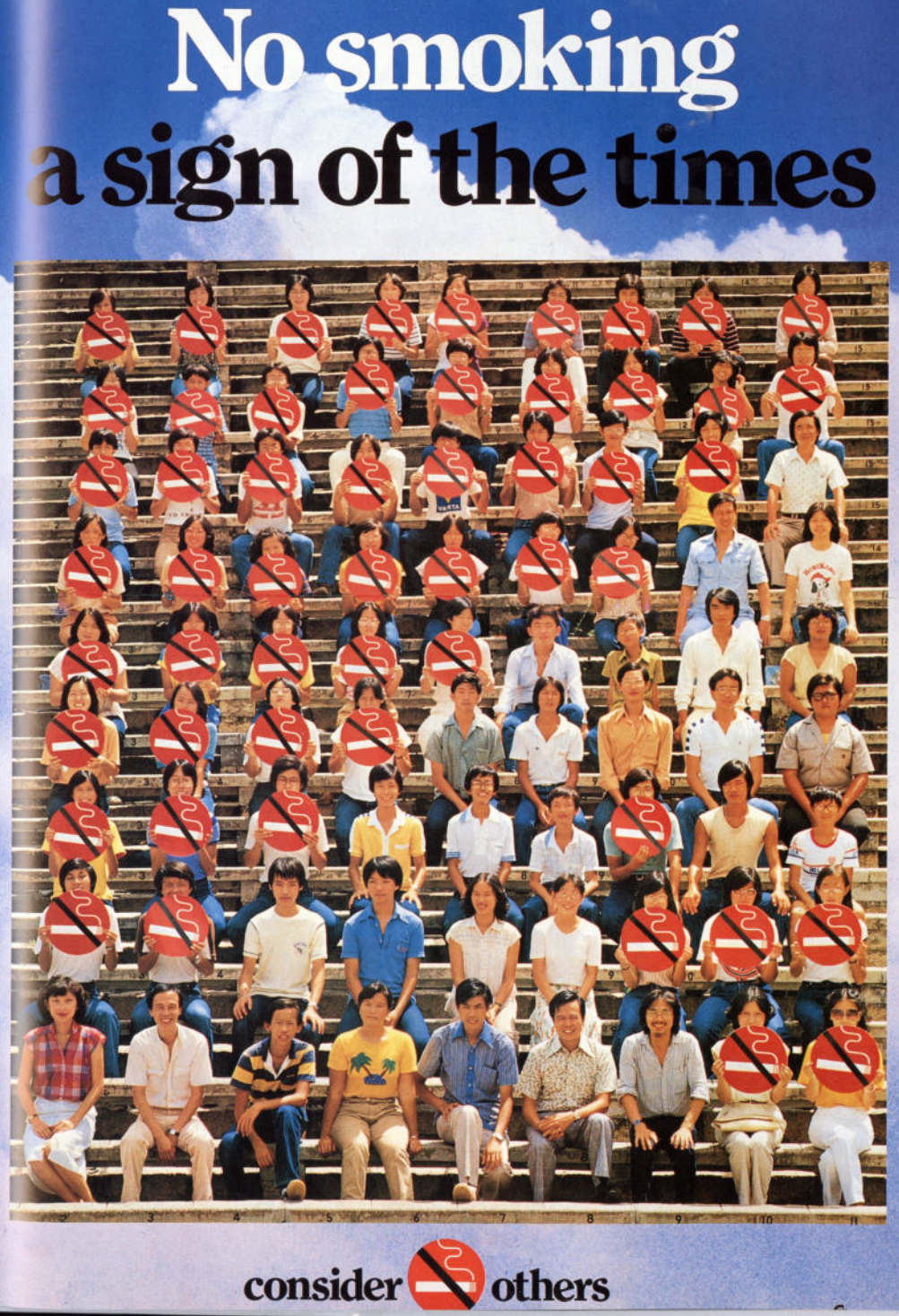
1988

1. The existing *News Photograph* inspired the slogan.

2. The words were originally written for the television spot.

3. The *Copy* and the visual were created together as one complete concept.

3



1981

DUAL LANGUAGE ADVERTISING

Producing advertising in two languages is difficult: it is even harder for two very different cultures.

Visually, there are formulas for balancing Chinese characters and English lettering; but it is best to have separate posters for each language. They have more impact.

All *Copy* has to be written with both languages and cultures in mind. A straight translation seldom works.

Sometimes, a concept has to be re-thought, re-created and re-styled for the second language. A good idea in Chinese may need modifying to work well in English.

The object of public service advertising is to change people's attitudes. It does not matter in the long run if the Chinese poster and the English poster don't say exactly the same thing. A literal translation may be neat and tidy — but it is not necessarily good, effective advertising.

1

1979

1 & 2 The newspapers were specially printed in both languages.

3 & 4 The design had to be modified for a second language in such a way that both versions were visually compatible when displayed together.

2

1979

3

1988

4

1988

AIDS

In 1987, the two popular misconceptions about AIDS in Hong Kong were: that Asians could not get AIDS; and it was a disease that could be contracted only by homosexuals. The other main problem was embarrassment. Nobody wanted to talk about it.

It would have been unconvincing to start off with a *Hard Sell* campaign when 99% of the population believed that they could not contract the virus.

It would have been a mistake to begin with highly explicit advertising which would enrage the public to the extent that the message would be lost in the public outcry.

With such a small number of known deaths from AIDS in Hong Kong, maintaining credibility was also a major problem. A *Strategy* had to be developed which would eliminate the misconceptions about AIDS and create a situation where more explicit and stronger advertising could be used convincingly and effectively.

USE CONDOMS
FOR SAFER SEX
IT'S NOT 100% SAFE BUT IT'S SAFER TO USE
A CONDOM EVERY TIME YOU HAVE SEX
ANY SEXUAL PARTNER COULD BE AN AIDS CARRIER
AIDS 愛滋病
FREE CONFIDENTIAL AIDS COUNSELLING SERVICE 3-7802211

1987

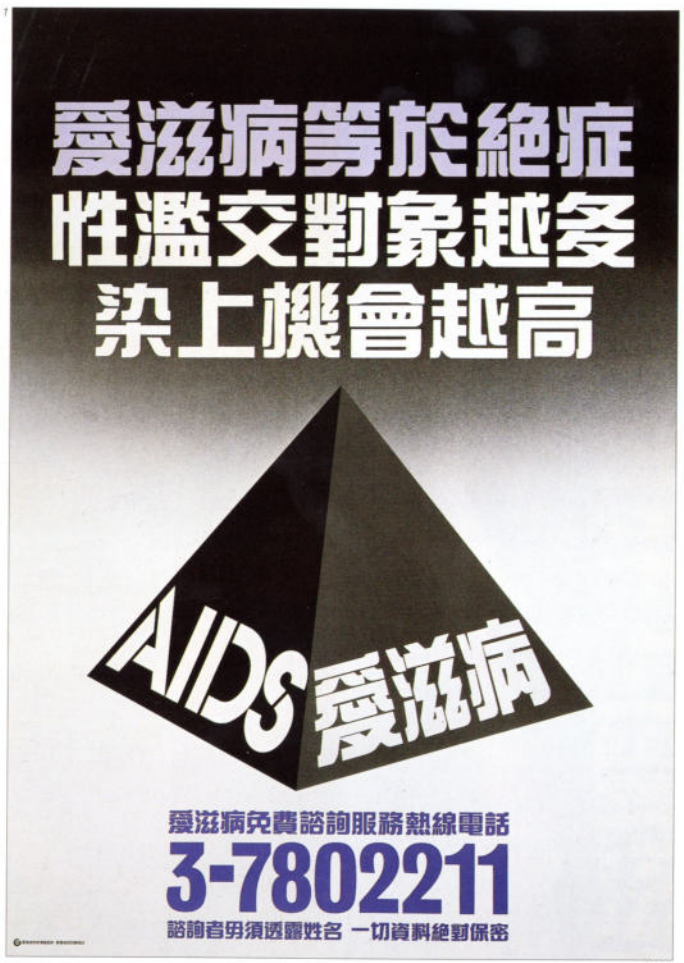
1 When it is necessary to put a lot of words on a poster to get the message across, the images should be kept simple.

STRATEGY

The broad *Strategy* was to prevent the spread of AIDS by making people aware of the dangers of this lethal disease and persuading them to change their sexual habits. This was backed by a hard slog, on-going, *Education* campaign to combat ignorance and keep the public up to date with the latest developments.

A very strong and memorable graphic was needed to hold the campaign together. A *Symbol*, "The Pyramid of Death", was created for this purpose. It established an identity at a time when the public was not ready for more explicit advertising. The pyramid graphically illustrated the risk posed to each individual, based on the statement: "When you sleep with somebody, you are sleeping with every person your partner has slept with for the last seven years".

A campaign of this sort must be evolutionary. There is only so much the public will take at any one time. The 1988 "One Sexual Encounter" posters would not have been effective in early 1987. They would have had no credibility. The public simply would not have believed the message. Many people who would have found these posters offensive in 1987 have had their attitudes changed. Responsible news coverage, as well as public service advertising, have helped to achieve this.



1987

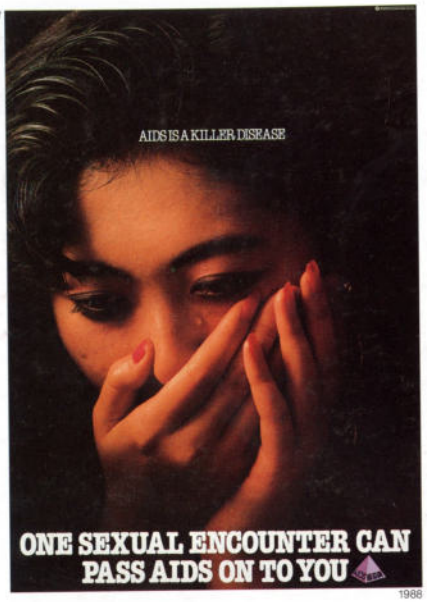
1 With a sensitive subject like AIDS, there are limits to what can be illustrated without causing offence. Therefore, a strong *Symbol* and campaign identity is essential.

TACTICS

The main use of *Tactics* is to implement *Strategy*. Their other purpose is to respond to day-to-day developments.

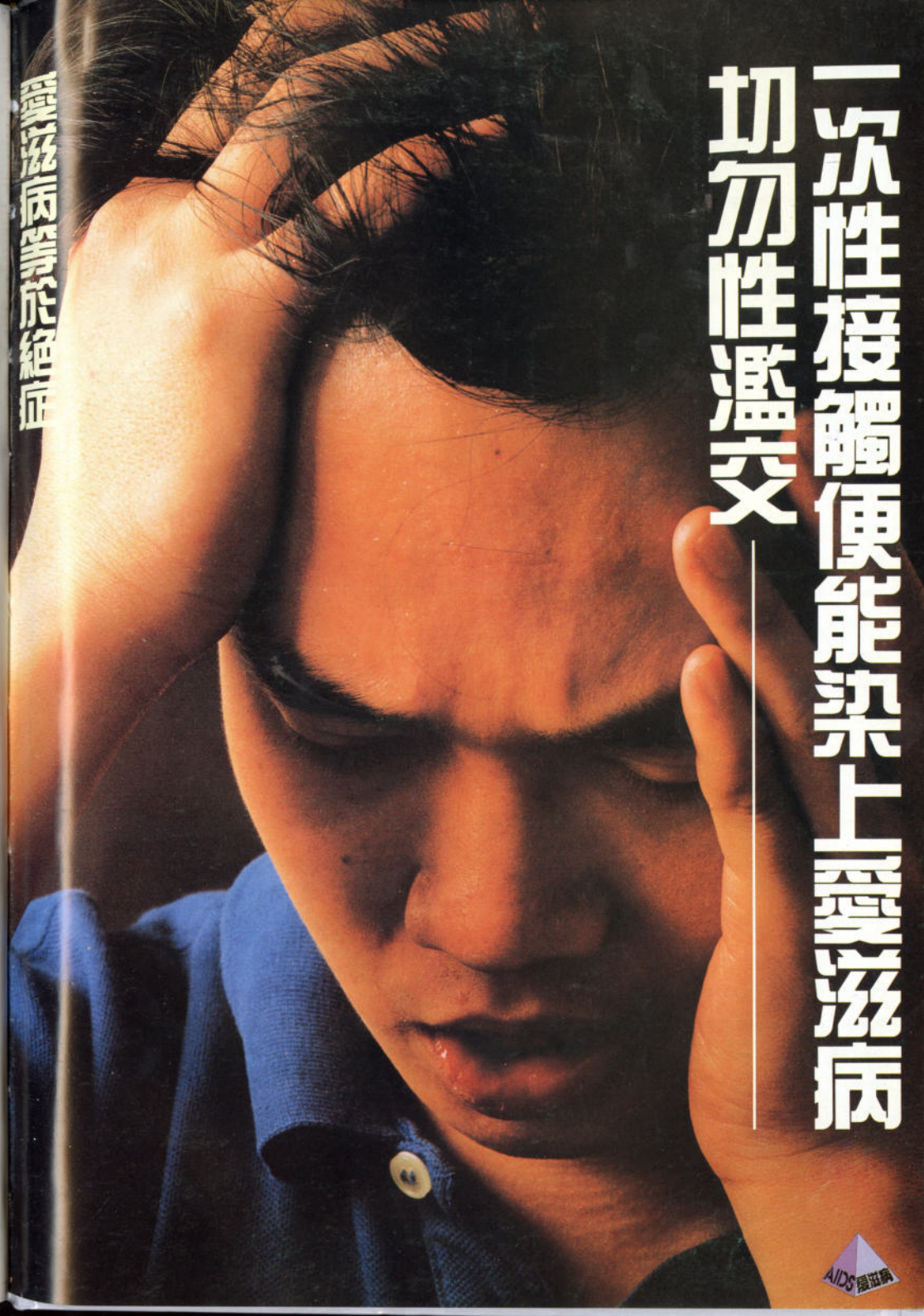
If the *Strategy* is to educate the community that AIDS is spread by promiscuity, *Tactics* are the way of changing people's sexual habits by, for instance, persuading them to use condoms or confine themselves to one partner.

Information posters, "The more sexual partners you have, the more chance you have of being infected" and "Use condoms for safer sex", were produced to back up more explicit television messages. With "One sexual encounter can pass AIDS on to you" the *Tactic of Fear* was used. It is unethical to frighten people in commercial advertising; but when human lives are at risk it is an acceptable *Tactic*. However, it must be credible to work.



1988

1 & 2 In the second year of the AIDS campaign, a harder approach was used. A year earlier, these posters would have lacked credibility and only antagonized the public.



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Poster Art is one of the oldest
advertising. In this book I hav
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design of the posters illustrate
also explained a few basic de
but they are very basic, and, I
can be broken.

I must stress again that there
designing a poster than stripp
lettering over a photograph. A
magazine or newspaper adve
does not necessarily make a
Poster design is a separate sk

Public service advertising anc
advertising are not the same.
The techniques required to change the
behaviour patterns of a society and to
create a social conscience, are different
from those that sell a bar of soap.

Hong Kong is a unique society that has
changed very quickly over the last 40
years. These posters reflect that change.

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